

Teresa O'Donnell

Music Association of Ireland: A Cultural and Social History

Abstract

A history of the Music Association of Ireland (MAI) from 1948 to the present day, employing the extensive archives of the MAI stored at the National Library of Ireland to address the changing cultural climate over the period, to delineate the debate on musical identity, national policy and music education. The thesis will focus on postcolonial, political and sociological theories and perspectives with particular emphasis on archival studies.

Considering the first MAI committee comprised of established composers such as Boydell, Deale, Grocock, Fleischmann and May it is unsurprising from the outset that the standing of the composer and the performance and publication of their works would always figure prominently in the activities of the newly established organisation. One of the driving forces of this Association was Olive Smith and her contribution to musical life in Ireland needs to be acknowledged. This study will particularly focus on her dynamic role in the MAI promoting a Schools' Recitals Scheme, a series of concerts organised to promote young Irish singers and instrumentalists and her most notable achievement, the establishment of the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland. Many of the initiatives set up by the MAI, as a voluntary body, now function as separate, professional organisations, for example the Music in Great Irish Houses Festival, Music Network, National Youth Orchestra and Contemporary Music Centre.



The Music Association of Ireland: A Cultural and Social History

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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July 2012

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Abstract

A history of the Music Association of Ireland (MAI) from 1948 to the present day, employing the extensive archives of the MAI stored at the National Library of Ireland to address the changing cultural climate over the period, to delineate the debate on musical identity, national policy and music education. The thesis will focus on postcolonial, political and sociological theories and perspectives with particular emphasis on archival studies.

Considering the first MAI committee comprised of established composers such as Boydell, Deale, Grocock, Fleischmann and May it is unsurprising from the outset that the standing of the composer and the performance and publication of their works would always figure prominently in the activities of the newly established organisation. One of the driving forces of this Association was Olive Smith and her contribution to musical life in Ireland needs to be acknowledged. This study will particularly focus on her dynamic role in the MAI promoting a Schools' Recitals Scheme, a series of concerts organised to promote young Irish singers and instrumentalists and her most notable achievement, the establishment of the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland. Many of the initiatives set up by the MAI, as a voluntary body, now function as separate, professional organisations, for example the Music in Great Irish Houses Festival, Music Network, National Youth Orchestra and Contemporary Music Centre.

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List of Abbreviations

AC	Arts Council
ACNI	Arts Council of Northern Ireland
AIC	Association of Irish Composers
CAH	Concert and Assembly Hall
CCÉ	Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann
CEMA	Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts
CMC	Contemporary Music Centre
CPNM	Committee for the Promotion of New Music
CRC	Cultural Relations Committee
Department of P&T	Department of Posts and Telegraphs
DoE	Department of Education
DGOS	Dublin Grand Opera Society
ECYO	European Community Youth Orchestra
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair
FCM	Friends of Classical Music
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
ISCM	International Society for Contemporary Music
ISM	Incorporated Society of Musicians
ISME	International Society for Music Education
IYO	Irish Youth Orchestra
JMI	Jeunesses Musicales International
MAI	Music Association of Ireland
MEND	Music Education National Debate
MTA	Music Teachers' Association
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCH	National Concert Hall
NLI	National Library of Ireland
IRL-Dn Acc 6000	National Library of Ireland, MAI Archive (Accession 6000)
NYOI	National Youth Orchestra of Ireland
PIANO	Provision and Institutional Arrangements Now for Orchestras and Ensembles
RDS	Royal Dublin Society
RÉ	Radio Éireann

RÉSO	Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra
RTÉ	Radio Teilifís Éireann
SMI	Society for Musicology in Ireland
SRS	Schools' Recitals Scheme
TCD	Trinity College, Dublin
TD	Teachta Dála
UCD	University College, Dublin
UNESCO	United Nations' Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation
VAT	Value Added Tax
VEC	Vocational Educational Committee

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MAI Logo and Timeline 1948-2007

1948	MAI founded First Monthly Bulletin Beginning of People's College Lectures
1950	Bach Festival
1951	Concert and Assembly Hall Ltd.
1952	Chamber Music Group
1953	MAI Composers' Group
1954	Bax Commemorative Concerts New London String Quartet Tour - First Country Tour
1956	MAI joined the International Music Council of UNESCO
1957	'Coming-Out' Recitals
1959	Handel Festival
1967	Schools' Recitals Scheme established Ógra Ceoil established Lady Mayer donated a Steinway upright piano and a specially designed trailer to the MAI to be used by musical societies around the country
1968	<i>Catalogue of Contemporary Irish Composers</i>
1969	First Festival of Twentieth Century Music <i>Counterpoint</i> magazine takes over from the monthly bulletin
1970	Irish Youth Orchestra
1973	Establishment of Varming Prize for composition <i>Catalogue of Contemporary Irish Composers</i> revised
1982 – 85	MAI provided administration for Dublin International Organ Festival
1981 – 85	MAI provided administration for Festival in Great Irish Houses
1981 – 85	<i>Soundpost</i> magazine replaced <i>Counterpoint</i>
1985	First reduction in funding by the Arts Council
1986	50% reduction in Arts Council grant
1994 – 2003	FÁS Community Employment Scheme
1998	Token funding of £5,000 from the Arts Council
2007	MAI becomes Friends of Classical Music

Chapter 1

Music Association of Ireland: A Voice for Art Music in Ireland

1.1 Introduction: Background to the study

In the autumn of 1947, a group of friends, Brian Boydell, Edgar Deale, Frederick May and Michael McMullin, met to discuss the poor standing of music in Ireland, the music profession and how they might raise the status of music throughout the country. Later, supported by a number of musical friends and colleagues, they concluded much could be achieved by a voluntary association. This idealism blossomed into the formation of the Music Association of Ireland (MAI) in 1948. Its Memorandum of Association had six objectives:

1. to further musical education
2. to improve conditions for composers and musicians generally
3. to work for the establishment of a National Concert Hall
4. to submit recommendations on musical policy to the authorities concerned
5. to encourage the formation of musical groups, societies and choirs throughout the country
6. to organise popular lectures, concerts and recitals and to awaken a musical consciousness in the nation.¹

During its sixty-year lifespan, the MAI contributed considerably to the musical life of Ireland, particularly in its educational initiatives and its efforts to create a musical infrastructure for composers. Its voluntary efforts, especially its initiatives such as the Composers' Group, Country (regional) Tours, Coming Out Recitals, Schools' Recitals Scheme (SRS), Irish Youth Orchestra (IYO)² and the Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival,³ grew into or influenced many of the independent, professional organisations which are prominent in Irish musical infrastructure today.

¹ MAI, *MAI Memorandum of Association* (1948), National Library of Ireland, MAI Archive (hereafter cited as IRL-Dn Acc 6000), Box 7.

² The Irish Youth Orchestra is now known as the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland; however, throughout the history of the MAI, it was known as the Irish Youth Orchestra and, for clarity, this is the designation used throughout this thesis.

³ The Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival is referred to as the Festival of Twentieth Century Music and Twentieth Century Music Festival in the MAI Archive and elsewhere; however, for clarity, I refer to it as the Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival throughout this thesis.

My first introduction to the MAI was in 1990 at a concert in my *alma mater*, Mount Sackville Secondary School, Chapelizod, Dublin 20, when we enjoyed a performance of John Buckley's *The Eagle* (1988).⁴ Many years later, I worked as Education Officer for the organisation for four years (2000 - 2004). During my final year there, I prepared the archives of the MAI for presentation to the National Library of Ireland (NLI). It was during this time that I became interested in exploring the reasons why this once thriving voluntary musical organisation lost Arts Council (AC) funding and, in receipt of a modest Department of Education (DoE)⁵ grant, struggled for survival, despite the fact that its former committee members read like a who's who of influential Irish musicians, composers, conductors, teachers, music professors, wealthy business people, etc.

The MAI Archive consists of fifty-three large uncatalogued boxes which have occupied storage space in the NLI, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, since 2004. With the exception of one visitor, who identified and noted its content, the archive of the MAI has remained completely overlooked. My research objectives are to reveal and acknowledge the legacy of the MAI and to establish firmly its contribution to the musical life of Ireland in the latter half of the twentieth century. The research should make a valuable contribution to the field of Irish musicology and will go some way to dispelling the perception that Ireland had a poor classical music infrastructure during the mid twentieth century. My thesis will:

- provide an account of the achievements of the MAI
- assess its contribution to national musical life and to the establishment of a musical infrastructure in Ireland since 1948
- evaluate the MAI's objectives in terms of its enduring legacy
- explore the reasons why this once thriving musical organisation went into decline.

This research considers the history of the MAI from 1948 to 2007. I had initially chosen the mid 1980s as a cut-off date for my research as this represented the climax of MAI's activities. From 1987 onwards, the MAI was only a shadow of its former self; with seriously reduced state funding, it served amateur musical activity and the SRS became the

⁴ *The Eagle* (1988) was commissioned by the MAI as part of its Workshop Scheme. It is scored for female voice, piano, 2 treble instruments (ad lib.) and optional percussion. It was premiered on 16 May, 1990, at Holy Faith Convent, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

⁵ The Department of Education (DoE) and/or the Department of Education and Science was renamed the Department of Education and Skills in 2010 but throughout the history of the MAI it was known as the Department of Education and, for clarity, this is the designation used throughout this thesis.

main focus of its attentions. There were attempts to form strategic links with FÁS between 1994 and 2003, but these failed to revive its fortunes. Despite the substantial diminution in its activities from the mid 1980s, it is important to include the entire period in my assessment of the MAI in order to provide a comprehensive account of its activities. In 2007, the MAI was dissolved and its activities faded into obscurity. A number of former members decided to continue the ideals of the MAI and established Friends of Classical Music.

A number of interviews were conducted ranging from formal to informal conversations with MAI staff, musicians who worked for the organisation, former committee members, relations of founding members and others connected to the Association over the years.⁶ This allowed for greater knowledge and a broad range of opinions on the Association and, ultimately, enhanced and deepened the research. In preparation for the interviews, I familiarised myself with literature on Qualitative Research theories and methods.⁷ The fact that many of those interviewed were either related to founding members of the MAI or had lived through the period concerned (or part thereof) proved significant and highlighted the value of the interview method to this type of research. For example, without interviewing Olive Smith's daughter, Gillian Smith, I would not have been able to evaluate the significant contribution of Olive Smith to music education and to fill other gaps which were identified during the research. Appendix A gives a digest of Gillian Smith's conversation with the author on 29 March, 2010.

1.2 Thesis structure

The thesis comprises of eight chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the pertinent literature from the disciplines of musicology, education, archival studies, history, sociology, politics, economics and cultural anthropology and contextualises the formation of the MAI in 1948. In

⁶ It must be pointed out, however, that a number of interviewees did not wish to be identified, though freely gave their ideas. The purpose of the interviews was primarily to fill information gaps in the Archive, however, this is an area which deserves further research at a later date.

⁷ Hitchcock and Hughes listed nine types of interviews, namely, structured, survey, counselling, diary, life history, ethnographic, informal/unstructured and conversations. G. Hitchcock and D. Hughes *Research and the Teacher: A Qualitative Introduction to School-based Research* (London: Routledge, 1989), 79. Steinar Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (California: Sage, 1996) offered practical guidelines on how to prepare for the interviews and suggested conceptual frames of reference. The two key areas of thematising and designing the interview were viewed as essential in preparation for interviews. I found this particularly beneficial as it enabled me to identify my objectives clearly, structure interviews according to themes, allow for flexibility or possible overlap with other interviews and showed the importance of being competent and well prepared. This approach made the process of analysing and interpreting the data under various themes easier after the interviews were concluded.

Chapters 3 to 6, I delineate the activities of the MAI by locating them in the context of cultural, political and social transformations of the period.

Chapter 3 explores the motivation behind the foundation of the MAI, its early years and its *raison d'être*. I consider how the MAI's birth in 1948 occurred at a time of considerable change in Ireland and worldwide, which focused national aspirations on modernisation in a world recovering from the effects of World War II. Here in Ireland, there was also the context of transition from primary dependence on an agricultural economy towards a developing industrial economic base as well as the post colonial impact on Irish society at large. Two crucial themes emerge in this Chapter, namely identity and education, both of which will re-surface in subsequent chapters. The MAI's primary objective was to promote classical music in Ireland, an art form previously associated with colonial culture. I will demonstrate how the MAI's exclusion of traditional Irish culture reified classical music's status as one of the exclusive high arts, thus isolating the Association from government and majority support. In discussing the MAI's unpublished *Memorandum: Music and the Nation* (1949), I illuminate the MAI's ambitious plans to overhaul musical life in Ireland and reveal the Association's 'delusional' aspiration of becoming official music advisers to the Irish government.

Chapter 4 focuses on the Association's second objective, i.e. the improvement of conditions for composers and musicians in Ireland. With established composers such as Brian Boydell, Edgar Deale, Joseph Grocock, Aloys Fleischmann and Frederick May on the MAI's first Council (committee), the plight of the composer in Ireland featured significantly on the fledgling Association's agenda and activities. In this chapter, the complex relationship between music and identity figures prominently. I explore the ideology of musical nationalism and the quandary faced by many composers in their attempts to reconcile national distinctiveness with musical modernity. In the face of this dilemma, I will show how the MAI sought to shift Irish contemporary music from its parochial focus towards an international focus. By concentrating on MAI initiatives, such as the Composers' Group and the Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival, I will expound the major contribution of the MAI in fostering talented Irish composers from its inception and, most importantly, trace the MAI's contribution towards the development of a musical infrastructure for indigenous Irish compositions. These initiatives anticipated current professional organisations associated with contemporary music in Ireland.

In Chapter 5, I depart from the format of the previous two chapters by concentrating on the achievements of one individual MAI Council member, Olive Smith. Much has been written on the life and works of Aloys Fleischmann, Brian Boydell, Frederick May and other MAI members, but Olive Smith's involvement in the MAI eclipses all others. Her contribution to music in Ireland, particularly in the educational sphere, merits acknowledgement. Here, I trace her involvement in the MAI from its inception, concentrating on MAI initiatives where she left a considerable mark. These efforts engendered a major fundraising campaign for a National Concert Hall (NCH), the establishment of Country Tours to promote music outside the capital, Coming Out Recitals for young musicians, the Schools' Recitals Scheme (SRS), Ógra Ceoil and the Irish Youth Orchestra (IYO).⁸ Each of these initiatives forms a major part of Olive Smith's enduring legacy and represents the commitment of a remarkable volunteer over nearly thirty years. By discussing the last four activities, I expose her admirable advocacy for promoting youth projects and opening up access to classical music.

Chapter 6 examines the remarkable transformations in cultural, social and pedagogical practices which resulted in the opening up of access to the arts from the 1970s. The MAI benefitted greatly from this surge in cultural activity and the Association became the AC's model in its pursuit of professionalising the arts in Ireland. I will examine the MAI's attempts to follow the directive of the AC in diversifying, professionalising and restructuring the Association and, ultimately, its failure to realise the wonderful opportunity afforded to it. An examination of the period concerned in this chapter (1973-1990) is of vital significance to this study. It firmly establishes how the direction and focus of earlier years became redundant and how, in spite of its tenacious efforts for survival, the Association went into decline. Dogged by financial and administrative problems from the early 1980s, the crisis reached a climax in the mid 1980s resulting in a dramatic reduction in AC funding. Despite clearing its debts, the MAI was unable to convince the AC to reconsider the funding situation and the establishment of Music Network in 1986 left the MAI surplus to requirements. This chapter, together with the discussion of the Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival in Chapter 4, illuminates the reasons why the MAI found itself without purpose or major funding from the mid 1980s.

⁸ Ógra Ceoil (1967) offered 15-25 year olds reduced entrance fees to concerts and other musical activities.

Chapter 7 examines the final years of the Association (1990-2007) and evaluates the causes of its demise and re-emergence in 2007 as the Friends of Classical Music. I conclude the thesis (Chapter 8) by evaluating each of the objectives of the MAI, the extent to which they were achieved and assess each objective in relation to contemporary developments in the musical life of Ireland. In so doing, I evaluate the MAI's contribution to Irish musical life from 1948 to 2007 and question whether the artistic life of the country is any better because of the MAI or will it be better or worse because of its passing.

1.3 Themes and cultural perspectives

During the process of collecting data from the MAI Archive, I identified the main headings around which to structure my thesis. A number of themes emerged and these helped in deciding the order of chapters. These themes included the arts, culture, volunteerism, identity, postcolonialism and related musical issues. In a postcolonial and post epochialistic Ireland, these themes proved provocative at times because the arts were markers of identity and correlated with Ireland's colonial past. Elitism and snobbery were associated with culture and the arts, particularly the high arts (ballet, opera, art music, visual arts and drama) and a major distinction emerged between high and popular culture.⁹ Though the MAI organised a limited number of concerts with an Irish flavour over the years, it was not until the 1980s that the MAI included traditional workshops and concerts in its programming and only then at the request of its main funding source, the AC. The MAI defended cultural exclusivity from its inception and, consequently, created a sense of social exclusivity (which, combined with sociability is the primary objective of any voluntary society).¹⁰ MAI wished to place Irish art music in the European cultural context with little regard for the dominant indigenous traditional culture. This desire for cultural purity was similar (but polar opposite) to the prevailing nationalist culture.

Cultural mono-centrism (as espoused by D.P. Moran, Douglas Hyde and Éamon de Valera) prevailed from the foundation of the Irish State and successive governments failed to accept their responsibility for developing the high arts; the developing of a policy for the high

⁹ Brian O'Neill, "Lifting the Veil: The Arts, Broadcasting and Irish Society," *Media, Culture & Society*, Dublin Institute of Technology 22, no. 6 (2000), under "Lifting the Veil," <http://mcs.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/22/6/763> (accessed 23 September, 2009).

¹⁰ Jennifer Kelly and R.V. Comerford, *Associational Culture in Ireland and Abroad* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010), 4. For further information see p. 34 of this thesis.

arts, it seemed, was not part of the nationalist agenda.¹¹ Without the tireless advocacy of altruistic people and a minority of individuals in government sympathetic to the cause of the arts, such as Fianna Fáil's P.J. Little,¹² the preservation and development of the high arts were largely left to voluntary groups. However, in the aftermath of World War II, signs of transformation in culture and the arts were spreading worldwide and cultural activism was viewed as an important catalyst in the process of reconciliation and rebuilding after the war.¹³ In 1945, the economist, John Maynard Keynes¹⁴ announced public funding of the arts in the UK which he hoped would end social exclusion in the arts.

The foundation of the MAI coincided with this time of considerable European change. However, in Ireland at this time, the pace of change was less urgent than among previously combatant nations; as a result, Ireland was slow to embrace modernism, internationalism and outward looking policies. Like the early twentieth century, the imperative was to sustain the nation's unique identity and there was much resistance to outside influences. Composers within the MAI wished to follow the example of Eastern European composers in uniting successfully, traditionalism and modernism. It wished to forge a national identity for Irish composers that would overcome cultural differences while still deeply rooted in the classical tradition.

In its educational policy, the MAI emphasised the development of musical literacy and the nurturing of music appreciation as a means of educating audiences from primary school level upwards. This approach was promulgated in order to establish Ireland as a formidable musical nation (in the European art music tradition). Its weakness, as an approach, was its overt derogation from, and little reference to, or acknowledgement of any responsibility towards Ireland's indigenous folk music tradition, so prized among Irish

¹¹ See Thomas Bodkin, "The Condition and Needs of Art in Ireland," in *The Voice of Ireland: A Survey of the Race and Nation from All Angles*, ed. William G. Fitzgerald (Dublin and London: Virtue and Company, 1924), 492-497 and *Report on the Arts in Ireland* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1949).

¹² P.J. Little (1884-1963), Fianna Fáil TD (1927-1954), Government Chief Whip and Minister for Posts and Telegraphs.

¹³ The European Cultural Foundation was established in Geneva in 1954 by Swiss philosopher, Denis de Rougemont, architect of the European Community, Robert Schuman, and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands to act as a vehicle in the process of healing and rebuilding after World War II. For further information see http://www.eurocult.org/cms/sites/www.eurocult.org/files/50_years_ECF_booklet.pdf (accessed 13 January, 2010).

¹⁴ John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), British economist.

nationalists since the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ My argument is that the MAI was established as a reaction against an insular Irish native culture. The founders of the MAI invited like-minded individuals to join their cause and inevitably certain agenda prevailed. MAI set out deliberately to transform the musical isolation of our, “deeply conservative and culturally impoverished nation”¹⁶ (as exemplified by de Valera’s dream of a rural Catholic Gaelic Ireland) into a modern, cosmopolitan nation with an appreciation and understanding of European artistic trends.

The lack of an educational policy for music, and its connotations with leisure, hindered its acceptance as a mainstream curriculum subject.¹⁷ The cause of music education down through the years has been dependent mainly on volunteers and this may have disabled political will. Without a strong music education base, how can a country expect to produce composers or develop an appreciative audience? White succinctly captures so well the prevailing attitude of this time.

If anything hindered the development of a secure base for art music in Ireland it was the impoverished condition of music literacy and of music education in general throughout the country.¹⁸

From the foundation of the State, and for much of the previous century, nationalistic discourse pervaded every aspect of politics, society and culture. Music, together with the Irish language and religion, served to cement an Irish identity and classical music did not fit into this ideology. The education system inherited by the new State, although deeply rooted in Victorian ideals, was reluctant to shed its aspiration for a uniquely Irish focus and this outlook was also evident in official perspectives on music education.

1.4 Challenges encountered during the study

In undertaking this study, I faced certain challenges. Having worked for the MAI for four years, it was imperative for me to remain impartial and question the objectivity and transparency of my research methods as they progressed. My knowledge of the Archive and

¹⁵ Apart from Fleischmann, MAI Council members had limited knowledge of Irish traditional music. However, at this time traditional Irish music was actively being preserved and promoted by cultural nationalist movements such as an t-Oireachtas and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (1951).

¹⁶ O’Neill, “Lifting the Veil,” 12.

¹⁷ Marie McCarthy notes that “the use and value of music in secondary schools” received official recognition in 1948 when the Department of Education appointed its first inspector for secondary schools. Marie McCarthy, *Passing It On: The Transmission of Music in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), 129.

¹⁸ Harry White, *The Keeper’s Recital* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 102.

the inner workings of the Association, while giving strength to the study, required me to rely on contextual studies to provide a theoretical framework and meaning for the information contained in the Archive. An historical account of the MAI would be incomplete without tracing the parallel cultural changes in Ireland from the foundation of the State and placing music within the wider context of the arts and society.

Two other important challenges arose during the period of the research; these were the lengthy process of cataloguing the disorganised state of the MAI Archive and accessing information in government departments. Both were not insurmountable; the first demonstrates how resources could have been better used during the years of the Celtic Tiger and the second illustrates a common problem facing researchers. The MAI Archive consists of fifty-three uncatalogued boxes in the NLI. Unfortunately, the boxes are not in chronological order and many have mixed content. The boxes contain correspondence with government departments and other agencies, letters from various schools and members of the Association, annual reports, minutes of meetings, copies of funding applications, concert programmes, membership subscriptions, newspaper cuttings and sheet music. As a result, I had to change my initial idea of working through material chronologically, first dealing with material from sources in the 1940s, then the 1950s, etc. In this process, it also became clear that the scope of my original proposed research plan was too large and cumbersome for the purposes of a coherent thesis. In short, the scope and the diversity of the Archive was too great for my purposes and, of necessity, I had to telescope certain aspects of the work, and emphasise what was clearly more important within the overall activities of the Association.¹⁹ This initial stage of cataloguing the contents of the archive was time-consuming, particularly as NLI protocol allowed me to view only one box at a time. Furthermore, the Archive consisted of a considerable amount of routine administration correspondence, which at times proved tedious and often had little or no academic gain for my study. However, this engagement was necessary, and important to ensure that I had missed nothing of consequence and, although the academic rewards were scant, I was confident that my study had gained significant understanding and credibility from the exercise.

Whilst sifting through the MAI Archive, one notable difference in the documents from the mid 1970s onwards is their lack of order as well as a reduction in the amount of

¹⁹ It is for this reason that the MAI's agitation for a National Concert Hall, although it occupied considerable effort and time, does not appear in my thesis as a separate chapter. Instead, I chose to include it under the chapter on Olive Smith, since she was a central figure in MAI concert hall activity, and it seemed more appropriate to include this as part of her important story.

material available compared to the earlier years of the Association. Correspondence and documentation were not always well filed and maintained, and there are significant gaps in the documentation from this period. Perhaps the material has simply disappeared or been mislaid, but considering the level of detail from the earlier years, this explanation is questionable. Consequently, I was compelled to pursue other lines of enquiry in order to piece together the history of the MAI during this period. This journey led me to the AC and the National Archives, Bishop Street, Dublin 8, where I discovered biographies and various newspaper articles which were vital in completing the overall jigsaw. Endeavours to locate data from government departments, such as the Departments of Post and Telegraphs, Finance and, in particular, Education, were generally not successful.

The delimitations of the study mentioned in previous paragraphs overlap with the identified shortcomings of the research. In the process of setting parameters, one is forced to sacrifice avenues of exploration which might compromise the coherence of the finished thesis and, in this respect, it is impossible to satisfy all end users (including the author). However, there is one issue which I would especially like to note. Though it was my initial intention to record the entire history and legacy of the MAI, it is impossible to provide a detailed account of all of its activities (including membership details) and this is worthy of further research at another time.

During an early part of my study, I was asked why I dedicated a chapter of the study to ‘amateur’ musician, Olive Smith, to the exclusion of other well known MAI figures such as Brian Boydell, Aloys Fleischmann and Frederick May. I prevaricated on the issue and resolved that more could be achieved by enlightening the reader on a lesser-known figure whose contribution to music in Ireland is significant, though not fully appreciated. The achievements of these MAI Council members are already well documented. Moreover, Olive Smith’s contribution to the MAI far outweighs any other contribution to the work of the Association. Another consideration was a decision to curtail the examination of the agitation for a national concert hall which I had originally envisaged as a standalone chapter. This saga had dragged on for many years and the vast amount of detail available proved mundane and uninteresting in the context of the entire thesis. Consequently, I decided to incorporate that information into the general discourse in Chapter 5 and consider it as a significant contribution to Olive Smith’s accomplishments.

Whilst opinions will differ as to whether the MAI was successful in its pursuit of developing music and music education in Ireland, I hope this thesis will foster greater appreciation and understanding of its advocacy and activities and will act as a reference along with the MAI Archive for researchers, historians and those interested in the period concerned. Finally, it should fill a void in the history of music in Ireland in the middle of the twentieth century. I believe the MAI played a valuable role in musical advocacy and deserves greater recognition than that based on the memory of its 'dying days'.

Chapter 2

Literary and Archival Review

2.1 Bringing the archive to life

Information about the MAI primarily derives from its archive at the NLI. It was evident from an early stage in my research that, aside from a handful of references to the MAI in other writings, nothing substantial was available from published sources. Referring to this kind of difficulty Séamas de Barra indicates what can result from an absence of commentary on art music in Ireland.

The lack of commentary on Irish art music ... allows a very incomplete and frequently distorted idea of musical composition and tradition in Ireland to prevail; that in turn has led to simplistic, un-nuanced appraisals of the work of individual figures.²⁰

This, in many ways, sums up my predicament and I had to rely on data gathered from a variety of disparate sources and disciplines to fill gaps in my understanding. The most important of these involved investigating other archives, newspaper articles, literature and conducting interviews with those associated with the MAI.

2.2 The archive as primary source

The primary source for this study consists of fifty-three boxes which constitute the MAI Archive. When I prepared the Archive for presentation to the NLI in 2004, I made an inventory of its contents, firstly sorting the material into chronological order, sub-dividing this into correspondence, SRS, minutes of meetings, national concert hall, 'Coming Out' Recitals, Country Tours, concerts, lectures, Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music, Festival in Great Irish Houses, Composers' Group, Bach and Handel festivals, FÁS Scheme, funding, publications (*Monthly Bulletin*, *Counterpoint* and *Soundpost* magazine), Chamber Music Group, Irish Youth Orchestra, etc. Unfortunately, my initial inventory proved purposeless because, in the intervening years, the order of the material from the different boxes was inadvertently confused. Because of the existence of mixed content from different years in each box the process of synthesising and analysing the contents was further

²⁰ Séamas de Barra, *Aloys Fleischmann* (Dublin: Field Day Publications, 2006), viii. Major twentieth century historical accounts of Ireland such as Joseph Lee's *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society*, Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland* and Tim Pat Coogan, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century*, contextualise the activities of the MAI and musical developments in twentieth century Ireland but, in general, music is given minimal discussion in Irish contemporary historical and cultural discourse.

complicated. However, by converting my original headings into themes, I was able to set the material in a wider cultural context and establish titles for thesis chapters. These new themes included music education, volunteerism, concert activity, issues affecting composers, the opening up of access to the arts, publications and sources of funding.

To enhance my archival skills, I consulted Helferty and Refaussé's *Directory of Irish Archives*.²¹ This provided a valuable starting point for knowledge on archival and manuscript collections held in Irish repositories. Cross-referencing the contents of the MAI Archive with findings in other archives was important to verify points of argument in my study. This publication encouraged me to investigate other archives such as the private archives of individuals linked to the Association, namely, Gillian Smith, the Fleischmann Archive in University College Cork, the Boydell's Papers at Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and the archives of RTE, DoE and AC. In order to gain a better understanding of archival methods and to provide my study with an authoritative framework, I examined two important books on archives and archival management, namely, *Archives and Archivists* edited by Alisa Holland and Kate Manning,²² and *Keeping Archives* edited by Judith Ellis.²³ Holland and Manning's collection of essays presents an illuminating history of the archives of organisations such as Dublin City Library, Irish Christian Brothers, Mercy Congregation and Waterford City Council, how they approached record management, ethics, the use of archives in education and an interesting examination of the influence of documents on everyday life. This text provided a solid foundation in developing an understanding of the MAI Archive and the discussion on digitisation and digital preservation was particularly useful for my future plans to digitise a selection of the MAI's concert programmes. The second noteworthy archival manual, *Keeping Archives*, is a useful introduction to archival management. This work offers information on decision criteria, systematic planning, terminology, administration, finding aids, document image processing, microfilm organisation, arrangement, description and legal issues. The case studies provided are related to archival tasks and help the reader appreciate how archives are organised. The three books mentioned above were vital in the preparatory stages of the research. They enabled me to gain a greater understanding of the archive, how the material should be presented and, ultimately, how the

²¹ Séamus Helferty and Raymond Refaussé, eds., *Directory of Irish Archives*, 4th ed. (Dublin: Four Courts 2003).

²² Alisa Holland and Kate Manning, eds., *Archives and Archivists* (Dublin: Four Courts 2006).

²³ Judith Ellis, ed., *Keeping Archives*, 2nd ed. (Port Melbourne: Thorpe in association with the Australian Society of Archivists, 1993).

MAI Archive might eventually be catalogued. The MAI Archive, though a valuable source of information, is incomplete.

2.3 MAI in published literature

We may supplement information in the Archive with references to the MAI, albeit limited, in publications such as *Music in Ireland, A Symposium*,²⁴ *The Keeper's Recital*²⁵ and *To Talent Alone*.²⁶ Citations to the MAI only merit a few lines in these major musicological publications and this appears to be a common trend. One might assume, therefore, that the MAI's contribution to music in Ireland was not particularly significant; however, direct references to the MAI in the publications of Joseph Grocock, Richard Pine and Marie McCarthy provide an insight into the legacy of the voluntary music organisation, particularly in its formative years. The contribution of voluntary music organisations in the twentieth century needs to be acknowledged and documented. It was through writings and research on key musical figures associated with the MAI, such as Aloys Fleischmann and Brian Boydell,²⁷ who played vital roles in the early years of the association and worked tirelessly as lobbyists to improve the standing of music in Ireland, that I was able to investigate other research avenues. However, more enlightening still is the fact that MAI Council members did not always agree on musical issues, such as the state of music in Ireland, music education and how to ameliorate difficulties experienced. Contributions to journals and biographies or memoirs written by or about these musical figures shed light on the activities of the MAI from the perspective of MAI Council members and also filled information gaps.

As previously mentioned, only three authors make significant direct reference to the MAI in their work. The first substantial assessment of the work of the MAI was made by MAI member, Joseph Grocock, in *A General Survey of Music in the Republic of Ireland* (1961).²⁸ In this publication, Grocock claimed that, in 1961, the MAI was well on its way to achieving each of its objectives and he painted a positive outlook for the organisation; however, on closer examination, Grocock's assessment appears overly positive and perhaps

²⁴ The objectives and early achievements of the MAI are mentioned in Aloys Fleischmann's *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 80.

²⁵ Harry White, *The Keeper's Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998).

²⁶ Richard Pine and Charles Acton, eds., *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848-1998* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1998).

²⁷ The unpublished memoirs of Brian Boydell provide a direct connection with a founding member of the MAI – which I was kindly permitted to view by his son, Barra Boydell.

²⁸ Joseph Grocock, *A General Survey of Music in the Republic of Ireland* (Dublin: Forás Éireann 1961), 68.

biased. For example, Grocock's claim that by 1961 the MAI had collected the "nucleus of the large fund" for the NCH project is exaggerated and the MAI Archive has disproved this claim.²⁹ In discussing the MAI's fourth objective, to submit recommendations on musical policy to the authorities concerned, Grocock merely states the MAI has produced memoranda for government but he neglects to mention that these memoranda, and MAI policy in general, were largely ignored by government. Shortcomings aside, Grocock's evaluation draws attention to the fact that many of the MAI's objectives could only be achieved through long-term projects and the success of each objective could be "achieved gradually through all MAI activities."³⁰

The fields of musicology, music education, cultural history, postcolonialism and identity are delineated in the scholarly researches of Richard Pine and Marie McCarthy. Each author has made a considerable contribution to the emerging literature on Irish music and music education in the twentieth century. Pine's seminal work, *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland* (2005), an institutional history of music in Radio (Teilifís) Éireann (RÉ) from 1926, provided a stable frame of reference for my study, particularly in relation to the MAI's relationship with RÉ and the Department of Posts and Telegraphs (Department of P&T). It is the first source that deals in detail with the MAI's Memorandum: *Music and the Nation* (1949).³¹ It is, therefore, a vital source as it reveals RÉ and the Department of P&T's perception of the MAI which helped in drawing conclusions as to why MAI's policies and ideologies were not generally well received at government level in the 1950s and 1960s. Pine's work substantiated my initial assumption that there was a deep mistrust between RÉ and the MAI, that RÉ regarded the MAI as belonging to Ireland's colonial past, it scoffed at the MAI's attempt to become a potential music advisory board to the government/RÉ and, ultimately, RÉ resented the MAI's challenge to what MAI described as RÉ's "absolute dictatorial power in musical matters".³² Pine states that, ironically

... the 'native' Irish, in a position of authority within RÉ, were perceived in some quarters as the protectors, or even the usurpers, of a cultural genre which was not natural to them and which would flourish better in the hands of those to whom it more

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ The MAI's Memorandum is merely listed as part of the work of the MAI in Fleischmann's *Music in Ireland, A Symposium* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 80. Apart from Pine, Karol Mullaney-Dignam, *State, Nation and Music in Independent Ireland, 1922-51* (PhD diss., NUIM, 2008) is the only other source that discusses the MAI's Memorandum in detail.

³² Richard Pine, *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 126.

properly belonged. This potential gulf would, in time, be bridged by the invaluable and far-sighted co-operation between the MAI and RTÉ in the Dublin Festival of Twentieth-Century Music.³³

Another enlightening *exposé* is Pine's comment on the number of concerts presented by the Dublin Philharmonic Society Orchestra (under the baton of John F. Larchet) in the late 1920s and 1930s. This contradicts the general perception that Ireland had limited access to regular concerts of symphonic repertoire and thus questions the extent to which the ideologies of Larchet and the MAI may have been exaggerated to suit their purpose.

The last major author to allude to the work of the MAI is Marie McCarthy, in *Passing It On* (1999). She acknowledges the MAI's positive impact on musical development in Ireland alongside other cultural musical organisations such as the Contemporary Music Centre and Music Network. McCarthy's discussion of the MAI, in the context of cultural nationalist movements is noteworthy. MAI was not a cultural nationalist movement, rather it was reactionary to the prevailing nationalist climate. The MAI did not include the promotion of traditional music on its agenda until the 1990s, by which time it was too late to halt its decline as an association relevant to all Irish musical arts (classical, traditional and popular). MAI's failure to engage with indigenous Irish folk music must be seen within the context of its particular vision for music in Ireland. This was never a uniquely Irish vision, but a European one.

McCarthy acknowledged the MAI's early involvement in educational matters, particularly its quest for the registration of music teachers and an insistence on appropriate qualifications for all music teachers. This firmly establishes the MAI as an important agitator for musical reform from its inception.

The year 1948 marked the foundation of the Music Association of Ireland (MAI) which took up issues of teacher education, something that had been discussed since the early years of the Irish Free State. Although the registration of music teachers continued to present a problem, since the majority did not possess a university degree in music, the MAI did initiate dialogue addressing this important area of secondary music education.³⁴

³³ Ibid., 127.

³⁴ Marie McCarthy, *Passing It On*, 129.

2.4 Arts Council publications and policy documents

The paucity of references to the MAI in musicological literature can be supplemented by on-line access to a large number of AC publications on <http://www.artscouncil.ie/en/publications.aspx>. This has been invaluable to my research, enabling me to cross-reference various issues and discover information not contained in the MAI Archive. In particular, Brian P. Kennedy's *Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and the Arts in Independent Ireland* (1990), *AC Annual Reports* and *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education* (1979), were very helpful to my study. The seminal work, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, uses a wealth of sources, such as government documents, the AC archives and private correspondence, to map the development of arts policy in Ireland from the foundation of the State. Its level of detail and discussion of all the arts presents a well-balanced, contextualised account of Irish cultural history. This book was a constant companion in my research and each chapter of the thesis has some general reference to it.

The *AC Annual Reports* filled gaps in the *MAI Annual Reports*. Income and expenditure accounts of the SRS did not regularly appear in *MAI Annual Reports* and, as a result, details of AC grants and other data had to be extracted from Annual Reports of the AC. These reports also impart information on certain activities of the MAI which, either does not exist in the Archive, or for which scant detail survives. For example, except for MAI Minutes of meetings, there is no correspondence relating to the scholarship programmes organised by the MAI for the AC (1973-1978). Two important AC policy documents, *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education* by Ciarán Benson (1979) and Donald Herron's *Deaf Ears? A Provision of Music Education in Irish Schools* (1985) trace the rise and fall of the MAI's influence from 1979 to 1985, as well as unprecedented developments in the arts in Ireland. In *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education*, also known as the *Benson Report*, the MAI received praise for initiatives such as the SRS and the IYO, its regional work and, particularly, its journey towards becoming a professional arts organisation. This is arguably the most important and glowing assessment the MAI received. For my study, the *Benson Report* enabled me to acquire a contemporary and independent evaluation of the activities of the MAI at its peak. By 1985, however, the activities of the MAI were not as important in the overall policy framework envisaged by the AC. Interestingly, there is only one insignificant reference to the MAI in the AC's 1985 policy document, *Deaf Ears*. Within the space of six years, the MAI had lost its status as the model of arts associations in Ireland.

On-line access to AC material greatly facilitates the research, both from information retrieval and analysis perspectives. As a source of information, AC documents and publications deepen the discourse and provide a context for MAI activities. Consequently, by engaging with AC and previously mentioned sources, the importance of the MAI in the cultural life of Ireland becomes more apparent. However, such an approach would be limited without addressing in parallel, issues such as post-colonialism, the debate about musical identity, the changing cultural climate at the time, national arts policy and music education.

2.5 Postcolonialism, identity and culture

MAI represented an alternative means of expression to post-colonial Ireland. In this study, the term 'post-colonial' is employed "to cover all the culture affected by an imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day."³⁵ Clifford Geertz in his seminal work, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), identified four phases of decolonisation – the phase during which nationalist movements are founded, the phase marked by victory over the coloniser, the process phase of organising the territory into states, and the final phase of defining the new state in terms of other states.³⁶ Geertz suggests that "the far-reaching changes, those altering the general shape and direction of social evolution," occur during the first and fourth phases (the fourth phase coinciding with the formation of the MAI). He highlights two primary approaches to nation-building in the post-independence period, namely essentialism³⁷ and epochalism.³⁸ The epochalist/modernist stage of nation-building is relevant to this study and dates from the mid to late 1940s. Marie McCarthy describes this final stage, epochalism, as focusing "more on the spirit of the time, the present needs of the people, and the modernisation of the nation."³⁹ In this post-colonial period, the epochalist approach to nation-building created an environment which rose above the tensions of the early phases of nation-building and focused on the establishment of the Irish nation in an international context.

³⁵ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds., "Introduction," in *The Empire Writes Back* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2.

³⁶ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 238.

³⁷ The essentialist period in Ireland dated from 1922 to the early 1940s and was marked by the establishment of an identity emulating a rural, Catholic and Gaelic Eden.

³⁸ Epochalism refers to the final stage in nation building/decolonisation when the process of modernisation begins.

³⁹ According to Marie McCarthy, both stages were particularly relevant after the foundation of the Irish State and in contrast to the epochalist approach to nation-building, the essentialist approach (dating from 1922 to the early 1940s) "established clear markers of national identity defined by native cultural heritage." McCarthy, *Passing It On*, 109.

2.6 The search for an Irish musical identity

In the early years of the new Irish State, nationalistic discourse pervaded every aspect of politics, society and culture; education and, more importantly from our perspective, music education were important in forging a distinctly homogenous Irish musical identity. The employment of culture in an attempt to define identity was common in Ireland in the eighteenth-century amongst the Ascendancy and the emerging bourgeoisie.⁴⁰ Attempting to define what constitutes an Irish identity is complicated and nations are not always ethnically homogenous but “typically formed around a dominant *ethnie*”.⁴¹ In the early phase of decolonisation, a group of humanist intellectuals including poets, historians, artists, journalists, scholars and musicians, influenced by a glorious Gaelic past, established a unique brand of Irish cultural nationalism. John Hutchinson described cultural nationalists as “moral innovators” who instituted “ideological movements at times of social crisis in order to transform the belief-systems of communities” and provided “models of socio-political development that guide their modernizing strategies”.⁴² Though not a cultural nationalist movement, the MAI could be understood within Hutchinson’s theory. Its Council could be described as classical music’s “moral innovators” who endeavoured to transform classical music in Ireland and change the perception that Ireland, as a nation, had contributed “virtually nothing to the world of music”.⁴³ In achieving this, MAI was not inspired by a glorious native past; rather it substituted cultural nationalism for cultural internationalism.⁴⁴ This rejection of cultural nationalism was evidenced in the MAI’s selection of a lyre as its logo, as opposed to the harp, or similar nationalist iconology and also in its rejection of indigenous forms of musical expression.

Attitudes to culture, identity and, in particular, music in the twentieth century were shaped profoundly by the formation of various cultural nationalist movements in the closing

⁴⁰ For further information see Leith Davis, *Music, Postcolonialism and Gender: The Construction of Irish National Identity, 1724–1874* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2006) and Harry White, *The Keeper’s Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland 1770–1970* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998).

⁴¹ Michael Murphy, “Introduction,” in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism*, eds. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press 2001), 5.

⁴² John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), quoted in *Nationalism*, eds. John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: Oxford Readers, 1994), 127.

⁴³ “New Group to Promote Music,” *The Irish Times*, 21 May 1948.

⁴⁴ For a detailed discussion on the debate between Irish cultural nationalists and internationalists see Patrick Zuk, “Words for Music Perhaps? Irishness, Criticism and the Art Tradition,” *Irish Studies Review* 12, no.1 (2004), 11–29.

decades of the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ Alarmed by the decline in Irish customs and with the aspirations of Irish self-government becoming a reality, Irish cultural endeavour embraced a renewal of nationalist fervour. F.S.L. Lyons noted that an “extraordinary transference of energy from the life of politics into the life of culture” was experienced during the end of the nineteenth century resulting in the transformation of Irish society.⁴⁶ During this culturally progressive period at the turn of the twentieth century, Ireland witnessed the emergence of new organisations and doctrines articulated in the form of self help movements.⁴⁷ Each movement made a significant and distinctive contribution to fostering a new, shared identity for Irish people emphasising their membership of a noble Gaelic nation, albeit an idealised one.

Douglas Hyde’s seminal paper, ‘The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland’ (1892) encouraged Irish people not to be influenced by English literature, music, games and fashions but, instead, “to develop upon Irish lines” and to substitute Irish for every form of English culture.⁴⁸ He argued that anglicisation had impinged on music and contributed to the demise of Ireland’s national instrument the harp; he noted that if “Ireland loses her music, she loses, what is, after the Gaelic language and literature, her most valuable and most characteristic expression.”⁴⁹ In this way music became increasingly politicised; it blossomed into a cherished emblem of nationalism, cultural protectionism intensified and the schism between art music and the traditional repertory was magnified.⁵⁰ As White succinctly articulated, music travelled “a clear path from antiquarian zeal, through Romantic appropriation and political association, to full-blown nationalist ideology”.⁵¹ In upholding musical arrangements of the ethnic repertory as the accepted form of an identifiably Irish music, there may be a danger that the development of art music could be greatly impeded. The philosopher, Frantz Fanon, warned against seeking refuge in some “beautiful and splendid era

⁴⁵ The co-operation of disparate groupings, such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (1884), the Co-Operative Movement (1889), the Gaelic League (1893), Feis Ceoil (1896), An t-Oireachtas (1897) and the Irish Literary Theatre (1899), was essential in the revival and preservation of Irish sports, language, folklore and customs.

⁴⁶ “The Living and the Dead,” *The Irish Times*, 19 February, 2000.

⁴⁷ The term ‘self help movement’ is used to describe cultural movements of this period such as the Gaelic League, the co-operative movement, etc. by P. J. Mathews in *Revival: The Abbey Theatre, Sinn Féin, the Gaelic League and the Co-operative Movement* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2003).

⁴⁸ Douglas Hyde, “The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland (1892),” quoted in Breandán Ó Conaire, ed., *Douglas Hyde: Language, Lore and Lyrics* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1986), 167. This speech was delivered to the National Literary Society in Dublin on 25 November 1892.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Harry White, “Nationalism, Colonialism and the Cultural Stasis of Music in Ireland,” in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism*, eds. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press 2001), 266.

⁵¹ Ibid., 267.

whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others.”⁵² While the re-discovery of a Gaelic past provided inspiration for many cultural movements, White suggests that the long term effects arrested art music’s development in Ireland. Such imposed notions of identity made it difficult for music to break free from cultural bondage. Nonetheless, composers, such as Hamilton Harty, Charles Villiers Stanford, Michele Esposito, Robert O’Dwyer, Arthur Duff, A.J. Potter and Aloys Fleischmann, successfully contributed to classical music whilst also arranging Irish airs and incorporating Irish idioms in certain compositions. Fleischmann, in particular, captured the essence of this identity debate by stating that a “widespread cult of folk song is an excellent thing in itself, but it is also an end in itself.”⁵³ Further, he saw “little reason, why folk song material, used cunningly, kaleidoscopically, should bring on asthma, no matter what the style or school.”⁵⁴

The identity debacle together with the Irish cultural question were important issues for the MAI; however, what set its endeavours apart from previous attempts to establish an Irish school of composition was its determined efforts to remove contemporary Irish music from its provincial, essentialist setting and place it in an international context. In this respect, Edward Said’s writings provide an international perspective in which to explore the theory of postcolonialism, though his view of Ireland as existing within the same global framework as other Third World countries does not completely fit the Irish model.⁵⁵ Issues such as identity and culture in the Irish context are complicated by the proximity of the colonial power and by the fact that, as Said acknowledged, music can transgress the boundaries in which it exists or is placed.

No social system, no historical vision, no theoretical totalization, no matter how powerful, can exhaust all the alternatives or practices that exist within its [music’s] domain. There is always the possibility to transgress.⁵⁶

MAI, however, occupies an interesting space in the postcolonial domain as, unlike Yeats, whom Said upheld as the poet of national liberation, a key figure in the construction of a national Irish identity and central to the act of decolonisation, the music promoted by the MAI was that of the other cultural domain, i.e. the non-indigenous culture and it did not attempt to accommodate the native tradition within its own ideology. Nonetheless,

⁵² Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 188.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁴ Aloys Fleischmann, “Composition and the Folk Idiom,” *Ireland Today* 1, no. 6 (1936), 42.

⁵⁵ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993) and *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978).

⁵⁶ Edward Said, *Musical Elaborations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 55.

postcolonialism, as a theoretical framework, provides a useful measure against which to gauge the effects and reactions of a post imperialist nation to musical culture and the process of constructing a musical culture to suit nationalist ideals. Said described culture as

... all those practices, like the arts of description, communication and representation, which have relative autonomy from the economic, social and political realms, and which often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure.⁵⁷

In the Irish context, however, music, culture, society and the development of a national identity have always been inextricably linked and Said stated that music, “like literature is practised in a social and cultural setting” and, therefore, should not be discussed in isolation.⁵⁸

2.7 Cultural creativity

Participation in any organisation and the transmission of any cultural activity reinforces group identity, provides knowledge, performance opportunities and opens up networks of cultural possibilities.⁵⁹ Clifford Geertz’s anthropological approach to culture as “webs of significance”⁶⁰ from which man is suspended (having spun them himself) provides meaning to culture’s “system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life.”⁶¹ Each (cultural) group expresses its particular cultural symbols irrespective of cultural setting (family or community), but this can lead to a “struggle for hegemony” when opposing ideologies meet or collide.⁶² According to Christopher Small, music (of all the arts) is the most sensitive indicator of culture and “most closely tied to the subconscious attitudes and assumption on which we build our lives within society.”⁶³ Classical music and the arts were perceived as markers of identity, mainly a colonial one, enjoyed by the privileged few and were not in line with the nationalist ideology promoted by

⁵⁷ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xii.

⁵⁸ Said, *Musical Elaborations*, x.

⁵⁹ Joann Keali’inohomoku, “Culture Change: Function and Dysfunctional Expressions of Dance, a Form of Affective Culture,” in *The Performing Arts: Music and Dance*, eds. John Blacking and Joann Keali’inohomoku (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), 47.

⁶⁰ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 6.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁶² David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 15.

⁶³ Christopher Small, *Music, Society and Education* (London: John Calder, 1980), 80.

the new Irish State and its associated cultural bodies.⁶⁴ Successive governments failed to accept their responsibility for developing the arts and arts policy as part of the national agenda, believing this to be the remit of voluntary initiatives.⁶⁵ Consequently, music supporters, such as John F. Larchet, voiced their discontent at the poor state of music (and the arts generally) in Dublin at the time of the foundation of the State. He described how

... the present position of music in Dublin is rather discouraging. It possesses no concert hall, good or bad, and no permanent orchestra which could be called a symphony orchestra ... most of the people have no knowledge of Strauss, Brahms ... The real cause of the failure to appreciate good music in Dublin is that the people have never been taught to do so.⁶⁶

In his *Plea for Music*, Larchet described the music education system as “not merely wrong” but “fundamentally unsound”.⁶⁷ Whilst acknowledging Ireland’s rich folk-music heritage, Larchet questioned if it was “possible to live a healthy life on the tradition of the past” and vehemently opposed the policy of the new State which sought to spread its message of a uniquely Irish national value into every aspect of Irish life, including its musical education initiatives.⁶⁸ Much of Larchet’s writing is indistinguishable from that of the early MAI. The tendency for exaggeration and declarations of music being in a state of utter despair were also common in other arts disciplines. For example, art historian and collector, Thomas Bodkin wrote

... there is a belief widely prevalent among the Irish to the effect that they are a most artistic people. This belief is not without foundations. But the foundations were laid in and before the eighth century, and no super-structure worthy of serious notice has ever since been erected thereon.⁶⁹

Bodkin’s observations and recommendations were also ignored by successive governments and it would appear he was “a lone voice in submitting arts policy documents to government departments.”⁷⁰ In an essentialist Ireland, what room (or funding) was there for policies suggested by Bodkin, Larchet and others given the levels of poverty among the population at

⁶⁴ Marie McCarthy, “Music Education in the Emergent State,” in *Music in Ireland 1848-1998*, ed. Richard Pine (Cork: Mercier Press, 1998), 73-74.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁶⁶ John F. Larchet, “A Plea for Music,” in *The Voice of Ireland: A Survey of the Race and Nation from All Angles*, ed. William G. Fitzgerald (Dublin and London: Virtue and Company 1924), 508.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 509.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Bodkin, “The Condition and Needs of Art in Ireland,” 492.

⁷⁰ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 9.

large, during the first half of the twentieth century?⁷¹ Art music in Ireland from the 1920s onwards was supported primarily by voluntary groups who, largely unaffected by a nationalist political agenda, sought to promote classical music above all other genres which led to the polarisation of European art and native Irish musical traditions. It was not until the post-war period, when the political and social climate was transformed, that the ideological content of Larchet's writings and that of others could be realised.

Echoing Bodkin, Larchet and others, the MAI claimed that Ireland was not regarded as a musical nation, had few international musical figures and its rich collection of folk-songs represented its only musical heritage.⁷² MAI also suggested that Ireland's "backwardness" was as a result of centuries of neglect.⁷³

Our backwardness is, no doubt, due in no small part to the fact that we have been for hundreds of years under the domination of a country known throughout the cultured world as "The Country without music". Music has flourished in those countries where it has been subsidised and in fact is one of the arts most in need of financial aid. If the authorities are not agreeable to spend money on music our progress as a musical nation in the 20th century must be deferred; even with an annual grant from the Government it will take years of careful building to make up for centuries of neglect of Irish music.⁷⁴

This negative rhetoric is typical of early MAI agitation for reform. However, recent musicological research into nineteenth century concert activity in Ireland has contradicted these perceived notions of Ireland's poor musical infrastructure. It reveals a network of concerts and musical societies which substantiate Fleischmann's claim that musical activity of the nineteenth century surpassed that of the previous century.⁷⁵ The establishment of music societies, such as the Antient Concert Society (1834-1864), the Philharmonic Society (1826-1879), the founding of the Irish Academy of Music (later known as the Royal Irish Academy

⁷¹ According to the census of 1926, 800,000 people lived in overcrowded dwellings in the Free State; of these 22,915 families lived in one-roomed dwellings, 2,761 families with nine members in each (28,489 people) lived in two-roomed dwellings and the infant mortality rate in North Dublin City was 25.6%. For further information see Terence Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922-2002*, (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), 6.

⁷² Memorandum sent by MAI Honorary Secretary, Olive Smith to J. McCann (former Lord Mayor) and to An Taoiseach on 5 July, 1951, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Aloys Fleischmann, "Music and Society, 1850-1921," *A New History of Ireland VI* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 500. The calibre of visiting musicians to Ireland decreased in the nineteenth century, therefore, one must assume Fleischmann was referring to the volume of concert activity rather than quality. The research of Boydell and Fleischmann had previously exposed Dublin's rich musical life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the recent research of Catherine Ferris, Jennifer O'Connor, Lisa Parker, Axel Klein, Michael Murphy, Ita Beausang (née Hogan) and many more scholars has greatly enhanced our knowledge of music in the nineteenth century.

of Music, RIAM) in 1848 and the Feis Ceoil (1897),⁷⁶ had a profound effect on musical activity in Ireland. They heralded an exciting time for music making and music education in Ireland, at amateur and professional level, and laid the foundations for music organisations such as the MAI in the twentieth century.⁷⁷

2.8 New beginnings

The founders of the MAI sought to act as an umbrella group for all aspects of classical music in Ireland and work for the “restoration and recognition of music of a high standard as a part of normal life” in Ireland.⁷⁸ They advocated radical reforms to create “a vibrant musical scene in the country” influenced by contemporary European trends.⁷⁹ The MAI came into existence (1948) at a time when Ireland was beginning to progress toward modernisation. The election of the first inter-party Government⁸⁰ in February 1948 was indicative of the numerous changes which occurred in Ireland in the post-emergency period.

The country, it seemed, had been gazing at its own reflection since independence and many were becoming weary of the image. There was a new-found idealism which declared that the country would have to take her place among the nations, to face outside influences rather than seek to exclude them.⁸¹

Ireland gradually turned away from the previous administration’s conservative and protectionist economic policies in favour of more progressive, open policies, embarking upon an ambitious “building programme of houses and hospitals costing £120 million.”⁸² MAI was ready to embrace this progressive, outward-looking attitude and it benefited greatly from two significant events brought about by this official support of epochialism, namely, Bodkin’s *Report on the Arts in Ireland* (1949), which echoed much of the MAI’s discontent expressed in its Memorandum, and the ensuing establishment of the Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon) in 1951 which kept “the arts at arm’s length from political interference.”⁸³ Finally, it appeared Ireland had a government that was willing to “go forward in policies concerning the

⁷⁶ The Feis Ceoil is a competitive music festival founded in 1896 and first held in 1897. For further information see <http://feisceoil.ie> (accessed 24 February, 2010).

⁷⁷ Apart from the RIAM, all were essentially voluntary music organisations, dedicated to the promotion of music at amateur and professional level.

⁷⁸ “New Group to Promote Music,” *The Irish Times*, 12 July, 1948.

⁷⁹ Brian Boydell, *50th Anniversary Celebration Programme*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 29, 8.

⁸⁰ The inter-party Government consisted of Cumann na nGaedheal, Labour, Clann na Poblachta, Clann na Talmhan and the National Labour Party with John A. Costello as Taoiseach.

⁸¹ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 65.

⁸² Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-Century Ireland: Revolution and State Building* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2005), 202.

⁸³ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 2.

Arts” and negate years of apathy.⁸⁴ The MAI was well positioned to reap the rewards of this transformation in attitudes. With its strong Council of well-known musicians, composers and pedagogues, its aim “to make music a part of the education of every citizen” appeared to be a viable mission.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Thomas Bodkin, *Report on the Arts in Ireland* (Dublin: Government Stationery Office, 1949).

⁸⁵ Michael McMullin, “Introduction,” *Memorandum: Music and the Nation*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 18, 3.

Chapter 3

The Foundation and Early Activities of the Music Association of Ireland

3.1 The Beginnings

The MAI was founded in 1948, a time in Irish history that witnessed the emergence of the Irish nation from decades of self-imposed isolation up to the end of World War Two when the process of establishing a modern nation began. In this postcolonial period, progress towards modernisation began with the development of more outward economic and social policies. This was facilitated through the cultural activism of private and state-funded initiatives, for example the founding of the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra (1948), the Cultural Relations Committee (1949), the Arts Council (1951), Ceol Chumann na nÓg (1951),⁸⁶ Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (1951) and the MAI. It was also marked by the coming to power of the inter-party government (1948-1951) led by John A. Costello,⁸⁷ which ended sixteen years of uninterrupted Fianna Fáil rule. Terence Brown described this period as “a period when the country’s own internal historical life was entering on a crucial phase” and the MAI was eager to contribute to Ireland’s changing identity.⁸⁸

The establishment and early activities of the MAI were ‘reactionary’ to the prevailing nationalist or cultural mono-centrism which prevailed in post-independent Ireland. MAI’s Council moved into action without delay preparing six objectives and a substantial policy document (Memorandum: *Music and the Nation*) to ameliorate the position of classical music in Ireland. From the outset, it was evident that the MAI wished to become official music advisers to the Irish government. However, by exclusively dedicating itself to the improvement of classical music without consideration of Ireland’s indigenous music, the MAI would find it difficult to realise this aspiration in postcolonial Ireland. Furthermore, as a voluntary group with limited funds, one could argue that opposing the culture of the majority was a brave but, perhaps, ill-advised stance. Unlike previous music representative bodies such as the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM), the MAI was committed to maintaining

⁸⁶ Ceol Chumann na nÓg was founded by Lady Dorothy Mayer. It organised concerts by the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra for students of primary, secondary and vocational schools. For an account of Ceol Chumann na nÓg, see Joseph Grocock, *A General Survey of Music in the Republic of Ireland* (Dublin: Forás Éireann, 1961), 19.

⁸⁷ John A. Costello (1891-1976), Cumann na nGaedheal/Fine Gael TD, Taoiseach, Minister for Health and Attorney General of Ireland.

⁸⁸ Terence Brown, *Ireland, A Social and Cultural History 1922-2002* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), 180.

a purist musical identity which, unfortunately for it, was associated with Ireland's former colonisers. Nonetheless, it was resolute in creating a musically educated audience in Ireland and establishing an Irish contemporary school of composition based on the European tradition.

In selecting certain sections of the MAI's Memorandum, I will endeavour to shed light on this hitherto unpublished document which surveyed the state of music and music education in Ireland in the late 1940s and took nearly two years to complete. Though many issues raised in the Memorandum were prefigured by Robert Prescott Stewart, Annie Patterson, John F. Larchet, Aloys Fleischmann, P.J. Little and others, this substantial document represents one of the most significant contributions to the assessment of music and music-making in Ireland prior to Fleischmann's *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (1952). This period, the early 1950s, experienced a phase of lively musical debate on the future of music in Ireland, particularly in *The Bell*⁸⁹ and, as Fleischmann stated, "if things remain in a rut, it will not be for lack of opinions."⁹⁰ The post-emergency period ushered in a new era of profound change and idealism and Ireland, at last, appeared willing to embrace modernism and internationalism. The MAI believed it could wholly represent music's contribution to modern Ireland and could foster and develop art music. However, with contemporary critics stating that Irish people "had a superficial love of music" which "must be both simple and familiar",⁹¹ the MAI had undertaken an arduous, but inspiring mission.

3.2 Establishment of the MAI

The new found spirit of idealism and a desire "to ignite belief in the search for an individual style, free from the constraints of outdated national stereotypes", were reflected in the formation of various groups, such as the MAI.⁹² At a luncheon in the Unicorn Restaurant, Dublin, in early 1948, a group of friends, Brian Boydell,⁹³ Edgar Deale,⁹⁴ Frederick May⁹⁵

⁸⁹ *The Bell* (1940-1954) was a literary and intellectual journal founded by Seán Ó Faoláin.

⁹⁰ Aloys Fleischmann, "Future of Music in Ireland," *The Bell* 17, no. 1 (April 1951): 5.

⁹¹ Joseph O'Neill, "Music in Dublin," in *Music in Ireland: A Symposium*, ed. Aloys Fleischmann (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 260.

⁹² Jeremy Dibble, "The Composer in the Academy (1) 1850-1940," in *To Talent Alone: 1848-1998*, eds. Richard Pine and Charles Acton (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1998), 417.

⁹³ Brian Boydell (1917-2000), Irish composer, conductor, musician and Professor of Music at TCD (1962-1982).

⁹⁴ Edgar Deale (1902-1999), Irish composer and Insurance Manager at Zurich Insurance Company.

⁹⁵ Frederick May (1911-1985), Irish composer and Music Director at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin (1936-1948).

and Michael McMullin⁹⁶ discussed the standing of music, the music profession in Ireland and how they might raise the status of music throughout the country. Boydell later recounted in his memoirs how the four of them were “trying to do something for Irish musical life equivalent to the inspiring excitement that had resulted from the stimulus of fresh ideas in the visual arts” and opined that attempts to encourage music at all levels in society were unfocused and in need of a “more unified purpose.”⁹⁷ Simon McVeigh suggests that this notion of “formalizing the gathering of like-minded enthusiasts” is what attracts people to musical societies.⁹⁸ However, in looking “to the potential of continental techniques to fertilise their musical languages”, this grouping was, in effect, isolating itself “from an audience unsympathetic to their artistic aims.”⁹⁹

The ideas of Boydell and others were influenced by the establishment of the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) in Great Britain in 1940 which was founded to boost morale during wartime. The CEMA’s objectives were to maintain high standards in the arts, to allow widespread access to arts activities, to encourage music-making and the performance of drama by people from the community, and to employ professional unemployed musicians.¹⁰⁰ In 1946, the CEMA became known as the Arts Council of Great Britain with the British economist, John Maynard Keynes as chair. Meanwhile, P.J. Little was considering how the Irish government could emulate such cultural initiatives. Impressed by the CEMA, he embarked upon drawing up a memorandum for the creation of a Council of National Culture or a Cultural Institute. This cultural activism was part of a worldwide movement, most of which centred around promoting music and its performance at community level.¹⁰¹ Prior to World War II, various efforts were made to unite music educators globally. However, the period after the War was “full of hope for the peaceful coexistence of humankind worldwide,”¹⁰² which resulted in the establishment of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) founded in 1953. The ISME used music as

⁹⁶ Michael McMullin (1916 - 2012) was born in Ceylon and was a music critic with *The Irish Times*. Boydell described him as “a keen observer who had written articles on musical subjects” and “an outspoken virulent critic of the official musical establishment.” Brian Boydell, *The Roaring Forties and Thereabouts* (Dublin: Manuscript Autobiography, 1994), 68.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁹⁸ Simon McVeigh, “Introduction,” in *Concert Life in Eighteenth-century Britain*, eds. Susan Wollenberg and Simon McVeigh (Hants: Ashgate, 2004), 6.

⁹⁹ Dibble, “The Composer in the Academy (1) 1850-1940,” 416.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/history-arts-council/1940-45/> (accessed 5 August, 2010).

¹⁰¹ Marie McCarthy, *Toward a Global Community: The International Society for Music Education 1953-2003* (Australia: International Society for Music Education, 2004), 27-28.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 29.

a vehicle to strengthen “friendly working relations between all the musical cultures of the world”¹⁰³ and aimed “to promote understanding among people through music, particularly in the context of improving international relations.”¹⁰⁴ Boydell, May, McMullin and Deale were inspired to realise a similar vision for music in Ireland.

The core quartet of Boydell, Deale, May and McMullin were later joined by John Beckett, Brendan Dunne and Olive Smith. They decided to call a meeting of people receptive to their ideas and McMullin circulated a letter to their musical friends in search of support and financial assistance. Thirty-four people were invited to attend a meeting at 16A Lincoln Chambers, Dublin (the home of Dorothy Stokes)¹⁰⁵ on 30 March, 1948, but only sixteen attended: J.S. Beckett, Brian Boydell, Edgar Deale, James Delany, Brendan Dunne, Aloys Fleischmann, Arthur Franks, Dorothy Graham, Joseph Grocock, Victor Leeson, Terry O'Connor, Joseph O'Neill, Olive Smith, Dorothy Stokes, Thomas Tierney and William F. Watt. At this meeting, the National Music Association came into existence and it outlined its objectives as follows:

1. to further musical education
2. to improve conditions for composers and musicians generally
3. to work for the establishment of a National Concert Hall
4. to submit recommendations on musical policy to the authorities concerned
5. to encourage the formation of musical groups, societies and choirs throughout the country
6. to organise popular lectures, concerts and recitals and to awaken a musical consciousness in the nation.¹⁰⁶

Despite the disappointing attendance at this meeting, it was decided to convene another meeting as soon as possible and to prepare a circular imploring musicians to attend and support its cause. This meeting was held on 13 April, 1948, at the Presbyterian Association's Rooms, 16 Stephen's Green, Dublin and was attended by thirty-five people. The name of the Association was changed to the Music Association of Ireland and it immediately set about drawing up a constitution and electing a Council and honorary officers. Table 3.1 shows the

¹⁰³ Ibid., 30.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 27-28.

¹⁰⁵ 16A Lincoln Chambers was the venue for meetings in the early years of the Association and provided by Council member, Dorothy Stokes.

¹⁰⁶ MAI, *MAI Memorandum of Association* (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

first Council of the MAI which included illustrious academics, educationalists, composers and musicians.

Table 3.1. First Council of the MAI (1948)

Brian Boydell (chairman)	Nancie Lord
Edgar M. Deale	Frederick May
James Delany	Terry O'Connor
Brendan Dunne	Joseph O'Neill
Aloys Fleischmann	Dorothy Stokes
Joseph Grocock	William F. Watt
Anthony Hughes	Michael McMullin (honorary secretary)
Madeleine Larchet	Olive Smith (honorary treasurer)

Source: MAI, MAI Original Prospectus (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

A further meeting took place on 22 April, 1948. At a meeting on 18 May, 1948 at the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM), the new constitution was ratified, council members and officers were confirmed in office, members were enrolled and notices publicising the formation of the MAI and its objectives were sent to newspapers (see figs. 1 and 2).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ MAI, *Honorary Secretary's Report* (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

New Group To Promote Music

AN organisation, to be known as the Music Association of Ireland, has been formed with the object of working for the proper recognition and organisation of music in the cultural life of the nation. It has in view six specific aims—namely: to further musical education; to improve conditions for composers and musicians generally; to work for the establishment of a national concert hall; to submit recommendations on musical policy to the authorities concerned; to encourage the formation of musical groups, societies and choirs throughout the country; to organise popular lectures, concerts and recitals; and to awaken a musical consciousness in the nation.

A number of well-known musical people have been elected on the Council, which is comprised of:—Brian Boydell, James Delany, Brendan Dunne, Edgar M. Deale, Aloys Fleischman, Joseph Grocock, Anthony Hughes, Nannie Lord, Frederick May, Terry O'Connor, Joseph O'Neill, Dorothy Stokes and William F. Watt. Mrs. Lyell Smith is hon. treasurer, and Mr. Michael McMullin, 15 Upper Mount street, Dublin, is hon. secretary.

TO HELP STUDIES

Discussing the project with an *Irish Times* reporter, Mr. McMullin said that this country at the moment is contributing virtually nothing to the world of music. The new Council of Education being set up by the Government, he said, would be both encouraging and helpful to the furtherance of music if a professor could be elected to the Council. The Association was much impressed by the high standard shown by provincial competitors at the various Feiseanna, and they wanted to help the studies of those young people.

Mr. McMullin said he thought it would be helpful if the Radio Eireann Orchestra were sent on a tour of the country. A scheme for the exchange of composition with other countries, such as Sweden and Norway, was also contemplated.

The difficulty of getting their works published was also a severe handicap to Irish composers, one of whom had to wait 12 years to have his work put into print, and in the end had to go to an English publishing firm. High tariffs on all musical instruments coming into the country also provided another stumbling block to musical advancement.

Figure 1. "New Group to Promote Music," *The Irish Times*, 21 May, 1948.

Music Association

Several months ago Mr. Edgar M. Deale told me that there was a move afoot to form in Dublin a body of organised musical opinion which would formulate a musical policy for this country, and influence the authorities as far as possible to carry it out. Mr. Deale, who is a prominent member of the Culwick Choral Society, is connected with a number of Irish associations, including the Safety First Association of Ireland and the newly-formed Irish Association of Civil Liberty.

The musical association is, apparently, well under way; I have just received a pamphlet setting out the aims and objects of "The Musical Association of Ireland," which, it states, "has been founded in the belief that there is in Ireland, as in many other countries, a growing realisation of the immense importance of music to the community, and of the need for a restoration and recognition of music of a high standard as a part of normal life."

The objects of the new association are as follow:—(i) To further musical education; (ii) to improve conditions for composers and musicians generally; (iii) to work for the establishment of a national concert hall; (iv) to submit recommendations on musical policy to the authorities concerned; (v) to encourage the formation of musical groups, societies and choirs; (vi) to organise popular lectures, concerts and recitals, and to awaken a musical consciousness in the nation.

Their first task should be to try and persuade symphony concert audiences not to applaud uproariously unless they really enjoy a performance.

Figure 2. "An Irishman's Diary," *The Irish Times*, 12 July, 1948.

According to the MAI's *Original Prospectus*, the annual membership fee was ten shillings and potential members were urged to join the Association and "help add a new voice

to the chorus of nations.”¹⁰⁸ This document highlighted the value of music to the community, the urgent need for action to improve the standard of music in the country and the necessity of unifying existing disparate groups. If no action was taken, the author of the prospectus suggested that “the fate of music will again be left to the isolated efforts of individuals and to the haphazard interest of those who are not necessarily musical.”¹⁰⁹ The first meeting of the Council took place on 25 May, 1948 and, during its first year of existence, MAI membership totalled eighty-three, which disappointed the organisation.¹¹⁰

MAI’s concept of modelling itself as a unifying voice in Irish art music motivated it to equip Irish people with an appreciation of classical music and provide a suitable venue wherein members of the organisation would, by association, assimilate high culture. However, Burgess reminds us how the promotion and consumption of high culture sets groups apart from mainstream national culture or popular culture of the time.¹¹¹ This resistance by the MAI to other contemporary cultural movements consciously led the MAI to a “struggle for hegemony” against RE and the Irish cultural consciousness in general.¹¹² MAI’s association with high culture, as opposed to popular culture, deepened this divide and promoted MAI’s sense of social exclusion. Kelly and Comerford noted that the primary objective of any

... voluntary club or society, apart from a desire for sociability, is the cultivation of some form of social exclusivity ... Vitally, however, formal voluntary associations were also often a vehicle for disseminating the concepts of a new civil society among the lower social strata while also providing some scope for upward social mobility, although the extent to which this was practicable was by no means always clear.¹¹³

The MAI believed it was transmitting an exclusive culture to the Irish nation, offering it elite social opportunities, which had previously been the preserve of largely “Protestant upper

¹⁰⁸ MAI, *MAI Original Prospectus* (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ MAI, *Monthly Bulletin* (February 1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34. Anthony Hughes, editor of the Bulletin declared MAI membership of eighty-three for the first six months of its existence to be unacceptable and questioned how only such a small number of people could be interested in music in Ireland. The Irish Federation of Musicians’ membership totalled 340 on 31 December, 1948 which represented an increase of 77 members on the previous year. Interestingly, none of its committee members overlap with the MAI. *Irish Federation of Musicians’ Annual General Report and Statement of Accounts* (31 December, 1947), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

¹¹¹ Jean Burgess, “High Culture as Subculture: Brisbane’s Contemporary Chamber Music Scene” (MA diss. University of Queensland, 2004). <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/28527/1/28527.pdf> (accessed 1 March, 2012).

¹¹² Cairns and Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture*, 15.

¹¹³ Kelly and Comerford, *Associational Culture in Ireland and Abroad*, 4.

middle-class and aristocratic identities.”¹¹⁴ Because group identity is reinforced by participation in any organisation and transmission of any cultural activity,¹¹⁵ the MAI felt its altruistic journey would benefit ordinary Irish people, introducing high culture to a nation which it stated had little exposure to culture of note. Culture, however, is ever-evolving and rather than adopting the identity of a purist musical nation based on an imported culture, i.e. cultural imperialism, Timlinson’s theory of cultures, as having a reciprocal influence on each other, would have been a more inclusive approach for the MAI to adopt.¹¹⁶ This was concordant with Yeats’ idea of a unity of cultures as exemplified in the initial ideology of the Feis Ceoil but it was the antithesis of MAI’s objectives.

3.3 The MAI Memorandum: *Music and the Nation* (1949)

The MAI set itself six challenging and diverse aims; each objective would have proved arduous for any voluntary organisation to achieve then and, even now, particularly with no state funding and limited resources.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, the young, enthusiastic group of individuals heroically assumed the task of transforming music in Ireland, fostering an appreciation of classical music amongst young and old, and presenting Irish composers with a purpose-built space in which their music could be heard by Irish audiences on a regular basis. The MAI’s first objective, “to further musical education in Ireland” was its principal aim and from this the other objectives stemmed.¹¹⁸ Such was the enthusiasm of the fledgling organisation, the MAI assumed that this first objective was achievable within a reasonable space of time, despite previous unsuccessful attempts by leading musicians, conductors, composers and teachers. The remaining objectives would then be pursued.

The drawing up of the Memorandum, *Music and the Nation*, to be based on its six objectives, was the principal concern of the MAI Council during its first five meetings. The Memorandum was compiled by Michael McMullin, founder member and first honorary secretary. It was envisaged the Memorandum would “awaken people to the outstanding

¹¹⁴ Catherine Ferris, “The Use of Newspapers as a Source for Musicological Research: A Case Study of Dublin Musical Life 1840–44” (PhD diss., NUIM, 2011), 212.

¹¹⁵ Keali’Inohomoku, “Culture Change: Function and Dysfunctional Expressions of Dance, A Form of Affective Culture,” 47.

¹¹⁶ For further information see John Timlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Continuum, 1991).

¹¹⁷ Though the MAI considered itself the Irish musical counterpart of an international post-war music movement, the diversity of its interests makes it difficult to explore comparisons between the MAI and music associations in other countries.

¹¹⁸ MAI, *Memorandum of Association* (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

deficiencies” in musical life in Ireland.¹¹⁹ It consists of four parts: Introduction, Music in General Education, The Music Profession, and Summary/Conclusion (see table 3.2).

Table 3.2. MAI Memorandum - *Music and the Nation*

Part	Section	Detail
I	Introduction	
II	Music in General Education	(i) The Function of Music in Education (ii) Musical Education in Schools (iii) Teachers of Music (iv) Adult Musical Education
III	The Music Profession	(i) Criticism and the Importance of Standard (ii) Broadcasting (iii) The Orchestra (iv) A National Concert Hall (v) The Training of Musicians (vi) Composers
IV	Conclusion	

Source: Data derived from *Memorandum: Music and the Nation* (1949), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

The Introduction, Part I, highlighted the value of music, its educational role and the necessity for government to take an active role in funding and promoting music education and music at local, or community level. In Part II, a detailed programme to create a musical infrastructure in Ireland was outlined, covering areas such as the development of a musically educated audience, the registration of suitably qualified instrumental teachers and the reform of the music syllabi at primary and secondary levels. Part III, ‘The Music Profession’, engaged with issues pertinent to the creation of a structure to foster and nurture Irish professional musicians. *Music and the Nation* called for the creation of a National Conservatory of Music with recognised university status and the building of a concert hall to house a full-time professional orchestra that would broadcast regularly on R  . The final part,

¹¹⁹ MAI, 1948 *Honorary Secretary’s Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

Part IV, surveyed arts policy in a selection of other European countries, with particular focus on the successful model of state-funded music initiatives in Sweden and Finland.¹²⁰ In preparing and submitting the Memorandum to various government departments, the MAI was taking its first step in tackling its fourth objective, “to submit recommendations on musical policy to the authorities concerned.”¹²¹ The formulation and development of policy and strategies is an on-going task for government and other organisations which changes and develops to suit the needs and aspirations of a particular time. Though many of the issues raised and recommendations made in the Memorandum are, however, still relevant in Ireland over sixty years later, the value of the Memorandum lies in its ability to identify areas in need of reform and suggest practical solutions which were, unfortunately, not achievable in Ireland of the late 1940s for economic and cultural reasons.

I would like to focus on two main areas which affected profoundly the direction of the MAI, namely Parts II and III of the Memorandum entitled, ‘Music in General Education’ and ‘The Music Profession’. Part II of the Memorandum submitted to the DoE in December 1949, emphasised the necessity to implement the ideas in the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation’s (INTO), *A Plan for Education* (1947)¹²² which advocated the dismissal of nineteenth-century methodologies of education and the complete transformation of the education system.¹²³ In Part III, two sections of particular interest are section (iii) ‘The Orchestra’ and section (v) ‘The Training of Musicians’. Part III was completed within a few months of commencement and certain sections were submitted to the Department of P&T by July 1948, over a year earlier than the submissions to the DoE. These two parts of the Memorandum are of particular interest because they shed new light on the standing of music and music education in Ireland in the late 1940s and, taking nearly two years to complete, were the result of considerable reflection by some of the most important musicians and music advocates during the period.

¹²⁰ McMullin visited Sweden and Finland prior to 1942 and had a keen interest in the music of Sibelius from his school days. Letter from Michael McMullin to Mary Boydell on 9 June, 2004. IRL-Dn MS 40,610.

¹²¹ MAI, *Articles of Association* (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

¹²² The INTO’s *A Plan for Education* (1947) suggested a graded series of sight readers, a relaxation in the standards in ear training, access to a wireless in every school, the establishment of mixed choirs after students have completed their school education, the provision of instrumental lessons, particularly the violin in larger schools, an expansion of music courses for trainee teachers, the employment of qualified music teachers and a re-organisation of music-teaching organisations and examining bodies. Irish National Teachers’ Organisation, *A Plan for Education* (Dublin: INTO, 1947), 54-59.

¹²³ McMullin, “Music in General Education,” 1.

3.4 MAI Memorandum Part II: Music in General Education

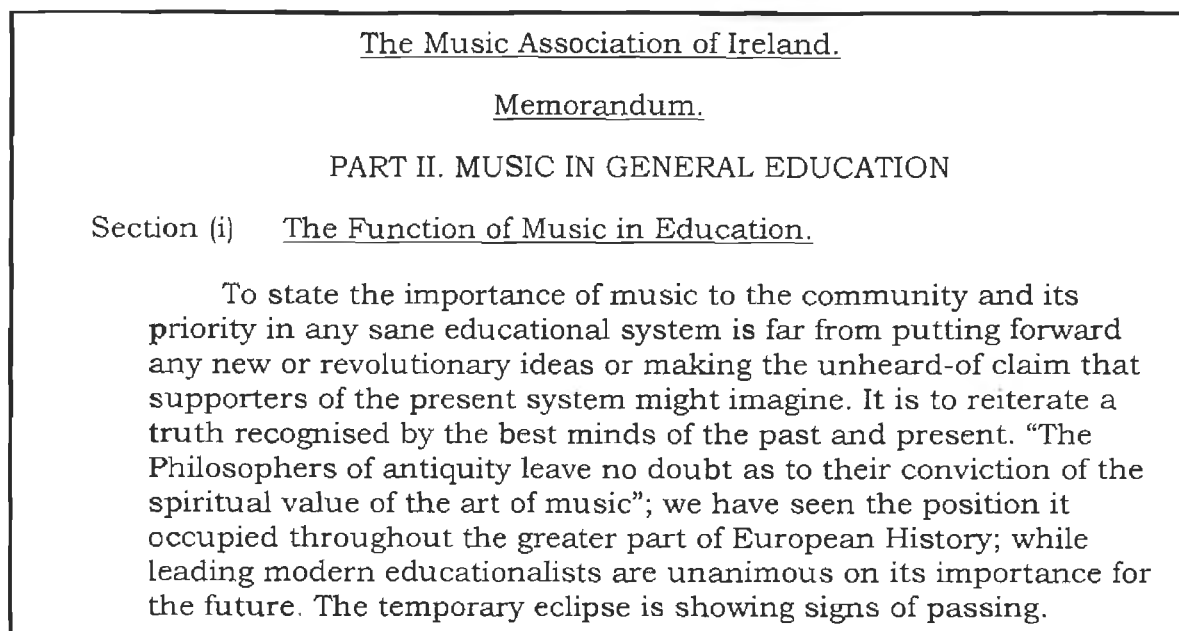


Figure 3. Memorandum: *Music and the Nation* Part II, (i) 'The Function of Music in Education'.

This section of the Memorandum focuses on the necessity to build up a musically educated people, the establishment of a register of teachers and suggests changes to the examination system and music syllabi at primary and secondary levels. It asserts that "nothing less will suffice than a complete reversal of the educational system current in our schools."¹²⁴ Music, Michael McMullin stated, was "one of the most neglected subjects" in the educational system and required a complete overhaul.¹²⁵ He suggested nineteenth-century values with their "arid disciplinarian approach" to theory should be replaced with fresh ideas where children could learn to enjoy music as a basic right.¹²⁶ This notion of educational reform was not unique to Ireland at this time but was, in fact, part of broader "national programmes of reconstruction", which became popular in many countries after World War II.¹²⁷

The introduction of the British Education Act (1944)¹²⁸ and the INTO's *A Plan for Education* (1947) were an indication of the raising of music's status in the educational system

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Áine Hyland and Kenneth Milne, eds., *Irish Educational Documents* Volume II (Dublin: Church of Ireland College of Education, 1992), 18.

¹²⁸ The British Education Act (1944) suggested that responsibility for education in England and Wales should lie with the State and Local Education Authorities. It introduced a tripartite system of education for secondary

and the blossoming of fresh attitudes. McMullin commended both reports and hoped they would deliver music into a new world of educational reform, with the arts receiving a far greater emphasis. Citing the Cambridgeshire Council of Musical Education (1924) and *The Cambridgeshire Report on the Teaching of Music* (1933), he stressed the life-long benefits of music and the personal and musical skills which could be achieved through intensive exposure, particularly at primary level. McMullin opined improvements could only be achieved through radical changes in teaching and learning practices as suggested in these international reports.¹²⁹

The lack of a national music policy and music's intimate connection with leisure hindered the acceptance of music as a mainstream curriculum subject.¹³⁰ In line with White's suggestions that Ireland's poor standard of music literacy and education impeded music in Ireland,¹³¹ the MAI argued that without a strong music education base, Ireland could not produce composers or develop appreciative audiences. Furthermore, it was convinced that musically educated audiences could only be achieved through the education system. According to McMullin, the

... aim should be in the first place to make music a part of the education of every citizen, starting at the very beginning of school life ... with the full realisation that we are not seeking to create a nation of professional musicians, but of reasonably educated music-lovers.¹³²

McMullin complained that syllabi focused on scales, exercises and unsuitable repertoire.¹³³ In his ideal educational setting, students would attend regular musical performances, each school would possess a gramophone, a wireless and a fully-equipped music room, music appreciation classes would be accessible for young people and classes in singing, sight singing, harmony and the history of music would form part of the overall musical experience. He also advocated the teaching of notation (through the tonic sol-fa system) as early as

schools (grammar, secondary modern and technical schools) and made secondary education free for all students.

¹²⁹ McMullin, "Music in General Education," 1-3.

¹³⁰ The Intermediate Education Act (1878) introduced a payment by results incentive and career-focused subjects which limited the time allotted to artistic subjects such as music in secondary schools and consequently music education became a peripheral subject. Ciarán Benson, *The Place of the Arts in Education* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1979), 20.

¹³¹ See p. 8 of this thesis. White, *The Keeper's Recital*, 102.

¹³² McMullin, "Music in General Education," 7.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 10.

possible, a view echoed in the McNair Report of 1944.¹³⁴ It should be noted that, at no stage in the document, are other musical genres such as traditional, popular or opera discussed.

The next area in need of radical reform was the examination system. McMullin criticised the over-emphasis on examination results, which, he claimed regularly became “an end in themselves”.¹³⁵ This system allowed little room for developing the student’s imagination or fostering a genuine interest in the subject and he recommended a syllabus and examination system be devised by a standing committee comprised of teachers, academics and professional musicians. Citing a *Plan for Education* (1947), McMullin proposed that only one official examination should be required in addition to continuous assessment in the classroom.¹³⁶ He asserted that it was not his intention to relax standards, but to substitute “a reasonable, practical and scientific method of education for one that is based on artificial, cut-and-dried formulas that originated purely in the heads of theoreticians”.¹³⁷ He also recommended a thorough examination of the grade examination system and, in particular, its use of foreign examining boards.¹³⁸

Independent of the MAI, Aloys Fleischmann also called for a reform of the grade examination system over many years. He staunchly supported the banning of all imported music exams because of their varying standards, the loss of revenue to native examining boards, and he proposed the establishment of a Music Board to set standards for all music exams.¹³⁹ The notion of examinations for music students was “a uniquely British enterprise” in the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁰ However, informal examinations took place at Mrs Allen’s Academy from the 1830s¹⁴¹ and at the RIAM.¹⁴² Fleischmann was not the first (or last) to

¹³⁴ The McNair Report / *Teachers and Youth Leaders: Report of the Committee to Consider the Supply, Recruitment and Training of Teachers and Youth Leaders* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1944) addressed the supply, recruitment and training of teachers and youth leaders.

¹³⁵ McMullin, “Music in General Education,” 7.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 6.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 12.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ruth Fleischmann, ed., *Aloys Fleischmann (1910-92) A Life for Music in Ireland, Remembered by Contemporaries* (Cork and Dublin: Mercier Press, 2000), 266.

¹⁴¹ Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 116.

¹⁴² According to Mrs Allen’s advertisements for her Academy at 5, Gardiner’s Row, Dublin in the *Evening Packet*, students were examined in public, orally and by performance; however there is no reference to the students receiving certificates or qualifications. For further information see Jennifer O’Connor, “The Role of Music in Nineteenth-Century Dublin,” (PhD diss., NUIM, 2010), 41.

criticise the presence of British examining boards in Ireland and, evidently, this bias towards British examining bodies was not a unique problem to music. One observer stated that there was “nothing distinctly Irish in the whole [education] system. No stimulation of patriotism. The whole outlook is English, and English in its most shallow and unreal form.”¹⁴³

It would also appoint professional committees to work out the details and syllabuses of each of the principal subjects, and would correlate their findings within the policy and organisation of the whole.

The Examination System: It is not the place here to put forward a detailed scheme for musical education, but it may point to certain broad principles upon which any such scheme will have to be built, and to certain aspects of such musical education as exists at present in our schools which contradict these principles.

Figure 4. Memorandum: *Music and the Nation* Part II, (ii) ‘Musical Education in Schools’.

McMullin’s strong view of teaching and teaching standards (instrumental and class teaching) of the time is also interesting.

While there are a number of music-teachers in the country at present, in primary and secondary schools, who are progressively minded and possess the greatest ability, it is well known that the standard of music-teaching in general is deplorably low.¹⁴⁴

To achieve the educational reforms referred to above, the varying standards of music teaching and music teachers in the country needed to be addressed urgently. In this respect, McMullin suggested reform at all levels from primary to third level. He identified three strands of teachers, namely “the specialist music-teacher or professional musician who teaches music in schools; the general teacher who teaches music as well as other subjects; and the private teacher.”¹⁴⁵ At primary level, McMullin recommended the appointment of a music teacher to a particular area who would work with a number of schools.¹⁴⁶ At second

¹⁴² The RIAM examined its students informally and began awarding certificates and diplomas in the early twentieth century. (One of the RIAM’s earliest diplomas was awarded to John F. Larchet in 1913). RIAM exams were influenced by Trinity College London which began (for men) in 1877. Local Centre Examinations were established in 1894 at locations around the country. Pine and Acton, eds., *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848-1998*, 435.

¹⁴³ Rev P. Forde, “Intermediate Education,” in *Leabhar na hÉireann: The Irish Yearbook 1908* (Dublin: Duffy, 1908), 214.

¹⁴⁴ McMullin, “Music in General Education,” 14.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. In the absence of a qualified music specialist, McMullin recommended that the general teacher use the radio (or gramophone) as a means of introducing students to music. The radio was an important tool in promoting culture and furthering the arts and consequently could be used as a valuable resource in building

level, McMullin echoed Fleischmann's view that only full-time, professional, qualified music teachers should be employed. He quoted Fleischmann's caustic attack: "it is a matter of indifference to the Department of Education how or by whom music is taught."¹⁴⁷ At teacher-training colleges, McMullin re-affirmed the necessity for qualified lecturers of music who would deliver music appreciation lectures, modern methods of teaching and encourage singing in the classroom. Trainee teachers should be encouraged and, possibly, obliged to attend a music course with those displaying musical talent being encouraged and funded to pursue their studies.¹⁴⁸ He proposed the registration of music teachers and the verification of their qualifications. This issue had previously been addressed by others, including Robert Prescott Stewart (1881) who emphasised the need for an "authorized qualification for teachers of music, whereby quacks would be discountenanced."¹⁴⁹ Annie Patterson was also incensed by the subject of unqualified teachers and discussed this topic many times in her articles in the *Weekly Irish Times* (1899-1901) and *Chats With Music Lovers* (1907). She argued that those who had no qualifications were doing a disservice to music and to their students, and were simply looking for an easy way to make money.

The quack, who professes to be anything that suits his purpose finds that, in teaching music he can impose upon the credulity of the public with less impunity than if he placed a brass plate on his door and declare himself a legal or medical practitioner ... If the young girl fresh from school can stumble through a few stock pieces she sees no harm in adding to her pocket-money by taking pianoforte pupils at a few shillings a quarter- her fees barely keep her in boots and gloves.¹⁵⁰

An attempt to address the problem was made in October 1936 (twelve years before the formation of the MAI), when the Cork-based Music Teachers' Association (MTA)¹⁵¹ encouraged all music teachers (primary, secondary and private instrumental) to join its Association by 1 October, 1937 and, after this date, only those with a recognised qualification could join the Association. The Musical Association of Ireland submitted a memorandum to

up and developing a musically educated audience comprised of all ages in society. 2RN organised a schools' programme from 1936 to 1941 which proved hugely popular.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. Quoted from Aloys Fleischmann, "The Outlook of Music in Ireland," *Studies* 24, no. 93 (March 1935): 128-129.

¹⁴⁸ McMullin, "Music in General Education," 15.

¹⁴⁹ Lisa Parker, "For the Purpose of Public Music Education," in *Music in Nineteenth Century Ireland: Irish Musical Studies* 9, eds. Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 204.

¹⁵⁰ Annie W. Patterson, *Chats with Music Lovers* (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1907), 139.

¹⁵¹ The MTA was founded in 1935 and by 1950 it had 109 members with Arnold Bax as President and Aloys Fleischmann acting as chairman. For further information see Ruth Fleischmann, ed., *Aloys Fleischmann (1910-92) A Life for Music in Ireland, Remembered by Contemporaries*, 266-267 and Séamas de Barra, *Aloys Fleischmann*, Dublin: Field Day Publications 2006.

the Commission on Vocational Organisation in 1939 with the hope of remedying the many abuses by over 80% of those who were practising as professional music teachers without qualifications or whose qualifications were obtained from music colleges whose *modus operandi* was for “personal profit”.¹⁵² Noting that the problem of unqualified private music teachers was not unique to Ireland, McMullin cited California and other western states in America who introduced legislation requiring teachers to be registered. He acknowledged the potential problems of replacing well-established unqualified music teachers with qualified teachers who may not necessarily be suited to the job and suggested each case should be dealt with individually and those lacking qualifications compelled to sit an oral examination. To avoid any potential abuses of power, a national body should be established to make recommendations to a music committee appointed by a Council of Education or a National Council of Music.¹⁵³ Boydell would later raise the issue of dismissing “unqualified charlatans” teaching in regional music schools in his article in *The Bell* (1951).¹⁵⁴ These debates and endeavours underline the awareness of the problem of unqualified teachers long before the MAI’s efforts on the matter, but the MAI’s endeavours made the issue current, relevant and stimulated musical debate.

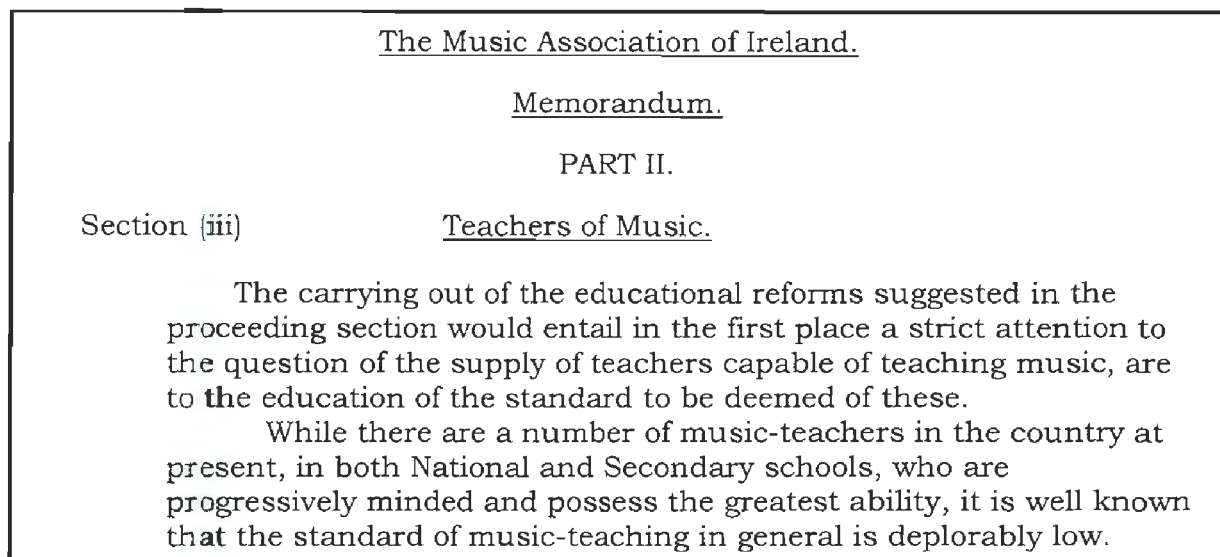


Figure 5. Memorandum: *Music and the Nation* Part II, (iii) ‘Teachers of Music’.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁵³ McMullin, “Music in General Education,” 16.

¹⁵⁴ Brian Boydell, “The Future of Music in Ireland,” *The Bell* 16, no. 4 (1951).

3.5 MAI Memorandum Part II, Section (iv): Adult Musical Education

Though the proper foundations for a musical nation can only be laid eventually in the education of children, adult musical education is probably equally important in the intervening stages.¹⁵⁵

The area of adult education was also a priority for the MAI and, in order to build up a musically educated audience, it proposed in its sixth objective to “organise popular lectures, concerts and recitals”.¹⁵⁶ In October 1948, within a few months of its establishment, the MAI had realised part of this objective by embarking upon a series of weekly music appreciation lectures in association with the Peoples’ College Adult Education Association (sponsored by the Irish Trade Union Congress).¹⁵⁷ Public lectures on music were not unusual in Dublin and were particularly prevalent in the nineteenth century with Robert Prescott Stewart delivering approximately fifty lectures on all aspects of music between 1862 and 1893.¹⁵⁸ The MAI envisaged the lectures would foster an interest in music and build up a larger musical audience, particularly among young people and working classes.¹⁵⁹ It is interesting that the music appreciation lecture series was the only recommendation in its Memorandum that the MAI acted upon immediately.

McMullin himself assumed the role of Director of Studies of the Peoples’ College Lecture Series and immediately set about devising a course of music appreciation lectures and compiling a comprehensive recommended reading list (see Appendix B).¹⁶⁰ The series of lectures commenced in October 1948, with a lecture by Brian Boydell entitled ‘Three ways of appreciating music; the distinction between good and bad music’.¹⁶¹ Seven lectures were

¹⁵⁵ McMullin, “Music in General Education,” 25.

¹⁵⁶ MAI, *Memorandum of Association* (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7. Music lectures were also organised by various universities, the Royal Dublin Society, Ceol Chumann na n-Óg, Vocational Education Committees (VEC), the Irish Countrywomen’s Association and Forás Éireann (funded by the Shaw Trust). For further information see Grocock, *A General Survey of Music in the Republic of Ireland*, 71.

¹⁵⁷ On 9 August, 1948, Ruaidhrí Roberts, honorary secretary of the Workers’ Educational Organisation, c/o Irish Trade Union Congress, invited the MAI to take part in the weekly music appreciation lectures of the People’s College Adult Education courses. Letter from Ruaidhrí Roberts to the MAI secretary on 9 August, 1948, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 42. According to its *Annual Report* (1948-49), the People’s College Adult Education Association was founded on 15 October, 1948.

¹⁵⁸ Parker, “For the Purpose of Public Music Education,” 187. The motivation for these public lectures was influenced by Platonic ideologies on music which espoused the potential of music to unify a society, rid itself of evil and “soften and purify the mind”. Ibid., 190.

¹⁵⁹ MAI, *A Dream Comes True, The Story of the Music Association of Ireland* (1968), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 13, 2.

¹⁶⁰ The recommended reading list would have been quite expensive, particularly for the target audience of young and working class people and availability of such works in libraries etc. would have been limited.

¹⁶¹ Boydell was undoubtedly the most experienced lecturer of the group having broadcast radio programmes on musical appreciation, contemporary Irish music and popular classics for Radio Éireann from the mid 1940s

delivered in the first term (October to December, 1948) by Thomas May, Liam Ó Laoghaire, Brendan Dunne, Brian Boydell and Michael McMullin (see table 3.3).¹⁶² Attendance at the first series of lectures numbered between thirty and forty which pleased both the MAI and the Peoples' College.¹⁶³

**Table 3.3. People's College/MAI Music Appreciation Lectures
(October - December 1948)**

Lecturer	Title of Lecture
Brian Boydell	Three ways of appreciating music. The distinction between good and bad music
Michael McMullin	Importance of music in European history and its value in education. Brief survey of historical field
Brendan Dunne	Styles of Handel and Mozart. Analysis of 1 st movement, Symphony No. 5 by Beethoven. Staff Notation
Brendan Dunne	Analysis of Symphony No. 5 by Beethoven
Liam Ó Laoghaire	National expression in music. Importance of music in social and national life
Thomas May	Talk from standpoint of non-professional music-lovers
Brian Boydell	Concluding recital. Brief analysis of <i>St. Anthony Variations</i> by Brahms

Source: People's College Lectures (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 42.

However, the venture did not run smoothly. In a letter to Ruaidhrí Roberts, McMullin suggested that it was “decidedly unfair to expect people to give a course of lectures, as

and later as music appreciation lecturer for the Vocational Education Scheme, under the auspices of the Royal Dublin Society. For further information on this see Axel Klein, “Brian Boydell: Of Man and Music,” in *The Life and Music of Brian Boydell*, eds. Gareth Cox, Axel Klein and Michael Taylor (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004), 7.

¹⁶² Lectures were initially held on Tuesday nights 8.15-10pm at the Thomas Ashe Hall. However, due to difficulties with this venue, the lectures were transferred to a room at the Women's Workers' Union Building, Fleet Street, Dublin. This venue also proved unsuitable as there was no piano available and the MAI decided to look at other alternatives, such as the RIAM. MAI, *1948 Honorary Secretary's Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7, 7.

¹⁶³ MAI, *Monthly Bulletin* (November 1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34.

professional musicians, without any kind of fee, and that this would not be asked of any other professional person, and least of all tradesmen and craftsmen represented by the Trades Unions themselves.”¹⁶⁴ McMullin claimed that the lack of remuneration for lecturers would result in him struggling to engage lecturers for subsequent terms. The matter, however, was resolved and a cheque of £17.17.0. was sent to the MAI.¹⁶⁵

3.6 General reaction to MAI Memorandum Part II: Music in General Education

The MAI hoped that, because it was the result of considerable reflection on, and research into music education systems in other jurisdictions, the Memorandum would provoke DoE officials into developing a cohesive and comprehensive plan for music education¹⁶⁶ but, to its disappointment, they did not receive the MAI Memorandum with the expected enthusiasm. It did, however, hurry the extension of the terms of the 1930 Vocational Education Act to include music within the remit of vocational education.¹⁶⁷ There are a number of possible reasons for the poor reception of Part II of the MAI’s Memorandum. Firstly, the perception of the MAI as ‘Anglo-Irish’ in identity by RÉ/Department of P&T¹⁶⁸ was not concordant with the prevailing (nationalist) ideology of Irish political and cultural life and, secondly, music was not a curriculum subject at this time and, therefore, would not have been the responsibility of the DoE. In its educational policy, the MAI emphasised the need to develop musical literacy and to nurture music appreciation as a means of educating audiences from primary school level upwards. In doing so, the Association hoped to establish Ireland as a formidable musical nation (in the European art music tradition). The perceived

¹⁶⁴ Letter from Michael McMullin to Ruaidhrí Roberts on 2 October, 1949, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 42.

¹⁶⁵ Music lecturers were the only lecturers to receive remuneration for lectures given at the People’s College. The fee to attend the series of lectures (in any subject) was 5/- or 2/6 for a short course and some unions introduced scholarships as incentives for their members. *Annual Report of the People’s College Adult Education Association* (1948-49), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 42.

¹⁶⁶ Letter from Aloys Fleischmann to Michael McMullin (no date), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 8.

¹⁶⁷ The Minister of Education, Risteárd Ua Maolchatha extended the terms of the 1930 Vocational Educational Act in 1949 to include the playing of musical instruments; vocal music including voice training, scale memorising, ear training, sight reading and choral training, the formation and training of choirs and orchestras, theory of music and music appreciation. The order was to apply to all vocational educational areas except Cork and Dublin where the Schools of Music (run by the VEC) already offered specialist courses in music. Ita Beausang, “The contribution of the VECs to Music Education in Ireland” (paper presented at the Conference of Society for Music Education in Ireland, University College Cork, 13 November, 2011).

¹⁶⁸ In *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland* (p.127-129), Richard Pine discussed the poor relationship that existed between RÉ/Department of P&T and the MAI. Pine stated that members of the MAI ‘hector’ RÉ officials on many occasions, openly criticised RÉ policies and exhibited “more than a little condescension” at times. He suggested that RÉ officials such as Eimear Ó Broin and later Gerard Victory viewed the MAI as group of Anglo-Irish individuals who were unconvinced by the “native Irish in a position of authority within RÉ.” Pine, *Music and Broadcasting*, 127.

weakness of this approach was its overt derogation with little reference to, and limited acknowledgement for, any responsibility towards Ireland's indigenous folk music tradition, which had been so prized among Irish nationalists since the late nineteenth century.

In spite of the disappointing response from official sources at this time, McMullin's recommendations, although relevant even today, remained aspirational. Though not an educationalist, professional musician or teacher, one could argue that McMullin was not qualified to comment or make recommendations on educational matters, but as a committed advocate for music education in Ireland, one must applaud his impressive commitment and understanding. In much of its ideology and recommendations, the Memorandum reiterated ideas presented by previous music activists as well as drawing from contemporary legislation and musical endeavours in Ireland, the UK and further afield. In so doing, it created an informative and beneficial assessment of music education in Ireland. There are many unachievable, utopian ideals in the Memorandum which, for economic and practical reasons, could never be implemented. Nevertheless in creating any policy, a certain level of aspiration and vision will inevitably emerge. Beyond the idealism, one is left wondering why McMullin researched and produced this document rather than other MAI figures such as Boydell and Fleischmann, both of whom had better credentials. The evidence of the Archive is that the Memorandum was largely left to McMullin's initiative and he seems to have had total autonomy in the matter (though McMullin sent various sections of the draft Memorandum to Council members who suggested minimal amendments).¹⁶⁹ In his foreword to the document, McMullin admitted to not having always "been able to comply with particular suggestions or criticism" from fellow Council members and acknowledged "instances of personal viewpoint or bias" in the document.¹⁷⁰ Verbal evidence, corroborated through interviews, suggests that McMullin was considered very radical, somewhat of a loose canon and was all too readily critical of the musical establishment, which may have explained why individual Council members failed to intervene until the initial draft of the document was circulated.¹⁷¹ It appears that the revised document, although less pointed in its criticism, was still provocative. Despite this, the DoE did not regard the document or its recommendations as important.

¹⁶⁹ Various correspondence between McMullin, Boydell, May and Fleischmann exist in the IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

¹⁷⁰ McMullin, "Foreword."

¹⁷¹ Information derived from an interview conducted with an individual (who wished to remain anonymous) connected to a founder member of the MAI and also from a private memo (anonymous) in the MAI Archive, Box 18.

Music was not a priority for the DoE at this time, other than the singing of songs which could be used to integrate with other curricular areas. Fleischmann's *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (1952) discussed the music education issue in greater detail and, because its contributors were specialists in their areas, this book undermined to some extent McMullin's Memorandum.

Parallels can be drawn between Part II of the Memorandum (Music in General Education), the MAI's objectives, and the principles of the Hungarian composer and pedagogue, Zoltan Kodály (1882-1967). Kodály believed that

- music education should begin as early as possible
- music education should be based on singing, everyone's personal musical instrument
- music taught should be based on the mother tongue/the folk music of that country
- music should be taught everyday
- only quality music should be taught
- the love of music should be instilled in each student through music classes
- the principal aim of music education is music literacy
- music education should educate the musical taste of everyone. Students should be able to distinguish between good and bad music
- music education should train the future audiences as well as the professional.¹⁷²

The Kodály method could have easily been adapted to suit an Irish context were it not for the MAI's dogged disregard for folk music, a fundamental principle in Kodály's ideology. It was obviously on this point that Fleischmann, always a champion of Irish folk music, differed from McMullin. One wonders if Fleischmann's *Symposium* of 1952 was a reaction against the provocative and uncompromising attitude evoked in McMullin's document. Instead, McMullin's attitude blatantly failed to ameliorate government's unsympathetic reception of the document at a time of greater social and economic need when the uniqueness of Irish identity had high value. Had the early MAI been more diplomatic and recommended an Irish adaptation of Kodály's methods and folk music values, it may have been received more

¹⁷² Katie Brooke Bagley, "The Kodaly Method: Standardizing Hungarian Music Education," ed. Csanád Nagypál (2004/2005) (Budapest: Korrekt Nyomda, 2009), 106. <http://www.fulbright.hu/book4/katiebrookebagley.pdf> (accessed 4 May, 2010).

favourably, offering the hope of a more inclusive approach to music education without the need to negate core principles.

3.7 MAI Memorandum Part III: The Music Profession

Section (v) The Training of Musicians.

In the foregoing mention of this memorandum we have indicated some of the things that are to be desired, and many improvements that might, and indeed best be brought about if the art of music and all that that means in terms of European Civilisation is to flourish in Ireland. If these aims are to be realised, or if realised are in the long run to be of proper value, one of the most necessary steps which must be taken is the establishment of a National Conservatory of Music in Dublin. Until this is done the State cannot be said to be showing a recognition of the value of music.

To introduce music widely into schools, or to set up musical centres throughout the country, would mean the pro-duction of an entirely new type of teacher, or of a very large number of music teachers,

Figure 6. Memorandum: *Music and the Nation* Part III, (v) ‘The Training of Musicians’

The other main focus of the Memorandum was Part III which dealt with the status of the music profession in Ireland. From the early days of the formation of the MAI, it was evident that Council members were concerned with matters pertaining to the management and appointment of personnel to the orchestras. Though only a month or so in existence, the MAI wrote to the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, James Everett¹⁷³ on 28 April, 1948, questioning RÉ’s competence in selecting a director of music and urging the Minister to consult external musical expertise before making any appointment. The MAI proposed that the Director of Music should not be allowed to exercise “absolute dictatorial power in musical matters” as this often resulted in a “narrow individual policy” likely to arrest musical progress.¹⁷⁴ Overt proposals such as this were ill-advised, particularly in light of the fact of the MAI’s aspiration to become a potential advisory board to the government/RÉ on musical matters and, secondly RÉ was the “principal source of patronage, employment and

¹⁷³ James Everett (1894-1967), Labour and later National Labour Party TD (1922-1967), leader of the National Labour Party (1944-1950), Minister for Posts and Telegraphs and Justice.

¹⁷⁴ Letter from MAI secretary to James Everett, Minister for Posts and Telegraphs on 28 April, 1948, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7. This letter was also sent to the Ministers for Education, External Affairs and Social Welfare.

performance, and was subsequently party to practically every significant musical enterprise in the country.”¹⁷⁵

It cannot be too strongly urged that musical appointments and decisions be put in the hands of musicians who are qualified to exercise judgement in them. In the past they have been too much in the control of Civil Service and political interests.¹⁷⁶

Though the membership of the MAI’s Council was a formidable and most capable grouping, who undoubtedly had more musical experience than those in R   to advise on musical matters, the officials in R   and government departments did not share the same view. Richard Pine is of the view that

... within R(T)   the MAI was commonly regarded as having been founded by a clique of largely Anglo-Irish citizens who saw ‘classical’ music as their personal prerogative, were unconvinced by the propriety of native government, and or R   in particular as the custodian of the new symphony orchestra, and regarded themselves as entitled to berate its administration for shortcomings which, if their view was sustainable, would be largely cultural in nature.¹⁷⁷

Pine suggested that the manner in which the MAI scolded officials in R   and the Department of P&T at various meetings was because the MAI had a covert, seventh objective, which he described as their “chief (but unwritten) aim” to remove control of the Orchestra from R  .¹⁷⁸ There is no evidence to substantiate this claim, but a number of quotations in the Archive suggest that this may have been part of the MAI’s initial more expansive plans for the Association.

Though there have been many good performances given from Radio   ireann, there have also been far too many bad ones, some of which would not be considered creditable even for amateurs ... One is sometimes left wondering what musical standards, if any, are required in order to broadcast from Radio   ireann, or by what system engagements are given.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Joseph J. Ryan, “Nationalism and Music in Ireland” (PhD diss., NUIM, 1991), 396.

¹⁷⁶ Pine, *Music and Broadcasting*, 129.

¹⁷⁷ Letter from Leon    Broin, Secretary of the Department of P&T (1948-1967) to James Everett on 20 July, 1948, quoted by Richard Pine in *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland*, 127.    Broin suggested the severe criticism levelled against R   and the Department by the MAI possibly stemmed from the fact that Boydell had unsuccessfully applied for the position of Music Director and Assistant Music Director, May failed to secure the position of temporary music director and Fleischmann, who was offered the position but refused as it was mainly an administrative post and allowed no provision for conducting public symphony concerts.

¹⁷⁸ Pine, *Music and Broadcasting*, 128.

¹⁷⁹ McMullin, “The Music Profession,” 10.

The establishment of the RÉSO in 1948 proved an important milestone for music in Ireland but, as there were insufficient Irish musicians of an appropriate standard to fill the ranks, RÉ recruited musicians from Central and Eastern Europe. Part III of the MAI Memorandum focused on three primary areas of concern, namely the appointment of a permanent conductor for the RÉSO,¹⁸⁰ the excessive number of foreign musicians in the Orchestra, and the resumption of regular public symphony concerts. McMullin acknowledged that whilst it was necessary to employ a conductor “with sufficient quality and experience from abroad” due to the circumstances, “the ideal thing for the training and perfection of an orchestra is to work constantly under one man.”¹⁸¹ He proposed that Ireland’s shortage of qualified musicians was due to the country’s lack of familiarity with orchestral music and a lack of facilities to encourage the learning of orchestral instruments.¹⁸² In the late 1940s, a number of music schools existed in Dublin (apart from the Municipal Schools of Music) that were privately owned.¹⁸³ McMullin felt that, rather than working in isolation, schools should learn to co-operate with each other and, ideally, should all be located in a central academy or conservatory. By merging the existing schools of music, a new building could be designed adjoining a national concert hall with fully-equipped lecture halls and practice rooms. He proposed the establishment of a state conservatory with university status, where tuition in instrumental music could be given as part of a degree course. Further, he recommended a transformation of the university music syllabus and, in particular, the development of an examination system and suitable courses for those interested in teaching music.

This National Conservatory would be staffed by leading musicians, composers and educationalists and controlled by a committee or national music council. The curriculum would include compulsory lectures and classes in the history of music (musicology and aesthetics) and aural training; it would embrace the analytical theories of Heinrich Schenker and follow contemporary trends in musicology. Visiting lecturers would be encouraged to spend periods at the conservatory which would also include a well-stocked, state-of-the-art library with written and audio materials.¹⁸⁴ McMullin was adamant that a conservatory of music would provide a panacea for all problems pertaining to the training of amateur and

¹⁸⁰ McMullin recommended that the position of Director of Music at RÉ should be distinct from conductor of the orchestra.

¹⁸¹ McMullin, “The Training of Musicians,” 6-7.

¹⁸² McMullin developed this theme in the Memorandum Part III, section (v), ‘The Training of Musicians’.

¹⁸³ Royal Irish Academy of Music, Municipal School of Music, The Leinster School of Music and The Read School of Pianoforte Playing, Harcourt Street.

¹⁸⁴ McMullin, “The Music Profession,” 21.

professional musicians and he noted that only “the State has the power and the means to set up a National Conservatory of Music, and only if the Conservatory is publicly owned can the proper liaison be brought about between it and other institutions, that it may play its full part in the national life.”¹⁸⁵

3.8 MAI representations to the Department of Posts and Telegraphs/Radio Éireann

Part III, section (iii) ‘The Orchestra’, along with section (ii) ‘Broadcasting’ were sent to the Department of P&T on 7 July, 1948. After an exchange of correspondence between the MAI and the Department, a meeting was scheduled for 25 October, 1948, with the Minister, James Everett¹⁸⁶ and the Department’s Secretary, Leon Ó Broin, at their offices in the General Post Office, O’Connell Street, Dublin 1. The MAI was represented by Boydell, Deale, Dunne and McMullin (see fig.7).



Figure 7. “Musicians’ Relations with Radio Éireann,” *The Irish Times*, 26 October 1948.

At the meeting, Deale reiterated the necessity for government to recognise fully the cultural value of music and to capitalise on the potential financial and cultural returns which

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 23. The notion of a centre for performing arts was also mentioned in the Provision and Institutional Arrangements Now for Orchestras and Ensembles (PIANO) Report (1996).

¹⁸⁶ In his memoirs, Leon Ó Broin wrote of Everett’s dislike of classical music and particularly of his opposition to the employment of foreign musicians in the orchestra. Ó Broin, *Just like Yesterday* (Dublin: Gill and McMillan, 1986), 176-7.

had been achieved in other European capitals. The main issues raised by Boydell *et al* were the need to create a permanent Director of Music at RÉ, a separate position to that of the conductor of the RÉSO, the appointment of conductors for a period of two years, the establishment of a music advisory board, the necessity to promote concerts more widely, the commissioning of new works by Irish composers, the employment of suitably qualified sound engineers and, most importantly, the resumption of the public symphony concerts at the Capitol Theatre. In contrast with the MAI's proposals to the DoE, its recommendations to the Department of P&T were more favourably received. Within a few weeks of the meeting, MAI members were informed of the outcome of the discussion in a four-page report. Ó Broin agreed with all recommendations in the Memorandum, except the suggestion that the "Minister should be advised by an independent advisory body of competent musical opinion".¹⁸⁷

Immediate action was taken to put pressure on the Government to resume the public symphony concerts.¹⁸⁸ In a letter to the Department of P&T dated 22 December, 1948, McMullin stated that the MAI would sponsor four symphony concerts at the Olympia Theatre, Dublin, subject to the following conditions: that the RÉSO and conductor would be provided and paid for by RÉ in lieu of weekly broadcasts, that RÉ would provide all necessary publicity, that all other expenses would be borne by the MAI and any profits would be employed to further the objectives of the MAI.¹⁸⁹ The Department, however, proceeded without negotiating terms with orchestral musicians resulting in disaffection amongst orchestral members who demanded extra fees for any projects run in association with outside bodies. After several months, the MAI Council, unwilling to aggravate the situation any further, decided to abandon the proposed concerts.

In pursuit of the two other issues mentioned in Part III of the Memorandum, namely, the employment of foreign musicians in the orchestra and the appointment of a permanent

¹⁸⁷ Pine, *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland*, 129.

¹⁸⁸ The public symphony concerts were cancelled by the Department of P&T because a loss of c.£100 had been incurred at each concert in 1947 (excluding salaries). The MAI addressed the cancellation of the public symphony concerts in late 1948, 1949 and 1950, but did not have the resources to fund a series by itself and failed to attract sponsorship from the Capitol Theatre, Dublin Corporation or the Mansion House. Copy of letter sent by Michael McMullin to W. Bergin, Capitol Theatre, Dublin on 17 November, 1948, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 8. This issue is also addressed by Pat O'Kelly, *The National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, 1948-1998: A Selected History* (Dublin: Radio Teilifís Éireann, 1998).

¹⁸⁹ Copy of a letter sent by Michael McMullin to Leon Ó Broin, Department of P&T on 22 December, 1948, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 8.

conductor to the orchestra, the MAI prepared, during the latter half of 1949, a document entitled, *Replacement of Wind Players in the Radio Éireann Orchestras*, which expressed disappointment that, “when the current wind section retires in ten to fifteen years, there would be little hope of an Irish musician securing the position as a foreign player would most likely be more qualified.”¹⁹⁰ MAI recommended that only the best foreign wind players with teaching qualifications should be employed for a period of two and a half years and, when the contract expired, the foreign player should be employed only if there was no Irish player of equivalent standard available. It also suggested that scholarships should be provided as incentives to young promising students, that students should be allowed to gain experience with the orchestra, and that expensive instruments, such as bassoons and oboes, should be subsidised.¹⁹¹ These were practical and reasonable recommendations. However, its suggestion that RÉ create two complete wind sections (similar to the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra,) was clearly impractical for financial reasons. While the long-term musical benefits of such an undertaking would be worthwhile, the suggestion must have bemused department officials. Nonetheless, Minister James Everett shared the Association’s vehement opposition to the employment of foreign musicians by RÉ and was determined to keep their appointment to a minimum. However, Richard Pine suggested that Everett’s interest in orchestral matters was more concerned with the central issue of protecting Irish jobs for Irish people.¹⁹²

After the initial meeting with the Minister and his officials, the MAI continued to make representations and advise the Department on the management of the orchestras and the appointment of musicians and conductors. MAI’s Francis Kelly wrote to C. Ó Ceallaigh, Director of Broadcasting on 25 May, 1949, to complain that certain musicians were favoured by RÉ. Ó Ceallaigh responded by informing Kelly that the engagement of artists was solely at the discretion of RÉ and was not the concern of the MAI. Notwithstanding this dismissal, the MAI was not deterred and it continued to raise the issue of there being no permanent conductor. In a letter to the Department of P&T on 29 December, 1950, it suggested that guest conductors should be engaged only for short-term contracts and that young Irish

¹⁹⁰ MAI, *Replacement of Wind Players in the Radio Éireann Orchestras* (1949), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 8.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² This sentiment was also strongly felt by the Irish Federation of Musicians and Allied Professions who embarked upon a campaign in opposition to the employment of foreign musicians. Pine, *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland*, 121.

conductors be allowed to gain experience.¹⁹³ The matter was discussed at a meeting with the MAI on 2 March, 1951, during which Ó Broin highlighted the difficulties in attracting conductors of note due to its limited budget. Not deterred, a two-page summary of the MAI's case for the appointment of a permanent conductor was sent to the Department in March, 1952.¹⁹⁴ Although the case was strongly made, it would not be heeded for many years.

3.9 Critical perceptions of the MAI Memorandum

In the various sections of the Memorandum submitted to government, the MAI stressed the need for government to take responsibility for the arts, arguing that music was the "most accessible art form."¹⁹⁵ However, the language used in the Memorandum, and certain sections more than others, reflected a trenchant criticism of the regime. If the MAI wished to work closely with the government to develop a cohesive plan for music, overt criticism was not advisable. McMullin was not alone in his criticism of government and the MAI Council was also complicit in this practice. Furthermore, the contemporary Bodkin Report (1949) also heavily criticised the government for neglecting its responsibility for the arts (more specifically art) and this spurred on the MAI in its efforts to secure reform. It stated that

... we have not merely failed to go forward in policies concerning the Arts, we have, in fact, regressed to arrive, many years ago, at a condition of apathy about them in which it has become justifiable to say in Ireland that no other country of western Europe cared less, or gave less, for the cultivation of the Arts.¹⁹⁶

A later submission by the MAI to the Department of the Taoiseach (1951), summarising its principal concerns, contained echoes of an article written by Bodkin in 1924, entitled, 'The Condition and Needs of Art in Ireland'. It stated that in

... some of the arts such as drama and poetry, we have an international reputation, but we are not thought of as a musical nation. We have produced very few figures of international stature in music and almost the only heritage of our musical past is our rich collection of folk-song.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Letter from Olive Smith to the Department of P&T on 29 December, 1950, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

¹⁹⁴ Letter from Olive Smith to the Department of P&T on March 1952, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

¹⁹⁵ McMullin, "Introduction," 3.

¹⁹⁶ Bodkin, *Report on the Arts in Ireland*, 9.

¹⁹⁷ Copy of Memorandum sent to J. McCann (former Lord Mayor of Dublin) and to *An Taoiseach* on 5 July, 1951 by Olive Smith, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

This is typical of MAI rhetoric of this time; it is exaggerated, provocative, almost childish in tone and the MAI appears to have conveniently forgotten renowned singers, such as John McCormack and Margaret Bourke Sheridan and composers, Herbert Hamilton Harty and Charles Villiers Stanford, to mention but a few. This document also denies the rich, amateur musical life which existed during the first half of the twentieth century, particularly in towns and cities. In an attempt to court favour with nationalist mentality at this time, and to eschew the perception of connections with English musical taste (however tenuous that may have been in reality), the MAI explained that Ireland's musical backwardness was as a result of being "under the domination of a country known throughout the cultured world as 'the country without music' for hundreds of years."¹⁹⁸ Music, it explained, flourished in other countries due to government funding but Ireland was so far behind these countries that, even if the government did fulfil its cultural obligation to music, it would "take years of careful building to make up for centuries of neglect of Irish music."¹⁹⁹ Criticisms of this nature which directly linked government with neglect were understandably not well received and, because of this, the Memorandum failed to make the impact that was expected.

Despite an appeal for subscriptions by the honorary treasurer, Olive Smith, the Memorandum was never published. However, other reasons may also have influenced this decision.²⁰⁰ As previously stated, it is known that some members of the MAI felt McMullin went too far in his criticism of the musical status of the country. Also, because he was not an educationalist, academic or professional musician, some may have considered him unqualified to comment on such matters with real authority. Eventually, the publication of Aloys Fleischmann's tome, *Music in Ireland, A Symposium* (1952), made the MAI document largely 'redundant'. However, MAI ideology and in particular, its attacks on the lack of government action in developing a national music policy also appeared in Fleischmann's publication. MAI Council member, Frederick May, continued with typical MAI rhetoric in his contribution to Fleischmann's tome where he stated that for

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Copy of letter entitled, *Present State of Music in Ireland* written by Olive Smith inviting subscriptions to help publish MAI's Memorandum. Those who subscribed 5/- or over would receive a free copy of the Memorandum. The letter also stated that the Memorandum was unanimously supported by Council members and that "outside opinion was also highly favourable" of it, but evidence in the MAI Archive contradicts this claim. The date of the document is unknown but the letter states that the relevant sections of the Memorandum had been submitted to the Department of P&T and the DoE, which suggests this was some time after December, 1949. MAI, *Present State of Music in Ireland* (no date), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

... the past twenty-nine years a native Government has been in power in Ireland, and though the period may be comparatively short, it is surely long enough to have enabled us to hammer out a certain basic policy with regard to music here, and the conditions governing its survival and development. But we are far too prone to indulge in idle, profitless debate, instead of getting together and by a joint effort, in other words by dint of organisation, so influencing public opinion as to force the Government to solve some of the major issues which are at stake.²⁰¹

Despite its shortcomings, the MAI's Memorandum did reveal the ideals of a new organisation brimming with musical enthusiasm, though built on a somewhat naive belief that suitable policies would be introduced fairly quickly as a result. McMullin defended his approach, and was obviously aware of the views of others. He knew that

... certain sections already written have been criticised as too Utopian ... calling for reforms, that are much too radical and beyond hope of realisation ... if one demands more, one is more likely to attract attention.²⁰²

In spite of the apparent failure of McMullin's project, it did stimulate a debate on the status of music in Ireland. This period, the early 1950s, experienced a phase of lively exchanges on the future of music in Ireland, particularly in *The Bell*.²⁰³ An article written by MAI founder member, Brian Boydell entitled, 'The Future of Music in Ireland' (1951), declared music in Ireland to be in a "shocking state".²⁰⁴ His article provoked reactions from three other contributors, namely, Aloys Fleischmann, P.J. Malone and Joseph O'Neill. In his response, Fleischmann described Boydell's observations as unwelcome, unfounded and "a trifle ungenerous".²⁰⁵ He pointed out that, although progress was slow, much had been done to improve the status of music and listed many positive initiatives introduced in the past few years to further the appreciation of music, namely, the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations (1949) and AC (1951), the Bach Bicentenary festival organised by the MAI and he mentioned the popularity of R  's school concerts at regional venues.²⁰⁶ In the second response to Boydell's article, P.J. Malone stressed the importance of

²⁰¹ Frederick May, "The Composer in Ireland," in *Music in Ireland: A Symposium*, ed. Aloys Fleischmann (Cork: Cork University Press, 1952), 164.

²⁰² MAI, *1948 Honorary Secretary's Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7, 3.

²⁰³ *The Bell* (1940-1954) was a literary and intellectual journal founded by Se  n    Faol  in.

²⁰⁴ Brian Boydell, "The Future of Music in Ireland," *The Bell* 16, no. 4 (January 1951): 1-9.

²⁰⁵ Aloys Fleischmann, "Future of Music in Ireland," *The Bell* 17, no. 1 (April 1951): 5.

²⁰⁶ In addressing a number of Boydell's criticisms of the standard of music in Ireland, Fleischmann listed the following positive improvements, namely, the introduction of compulsory class singing in primary schools under the supervision of four Inspectors, the DoE's Music Summer Schools (1946-1956), the improved standard of the R  SO and their increased performance at provincial concerts, Radio   ireann's prizes for

a musical education for children, as they represented future audiences; he urged the DoE to take into account the recommendations made in the INTO's *A Plan for Education* (1947) and suggested that local authorities should be responsible for the development of music at community level.²⁰⁷ The last contributor, Joseph O'Neill noted that music was not viewed as a viable career as there were limited employment and performing opportunities for those who wished to make music a full-time career. Commenting on career opportunities in general at this time, O'Neill questioned how

... many musicians in Ireland are earning £1,000 a year? Perhaps one or two after a lifetime of work. A first-class performer on a stringed instrument might obtain employment in Radio Éireann Orchestras, where he would earn about £400 a year.²⁰⁸

This observation echoed previous sentiments expressed by the MAI when it stated that "Irish musicians in general have to contend with employment on a casual labour basis" as Ireland did not possess a regular orchestra giving public concerts, comparable with those in Great Britain.²⁰⁹ For the first time in the history of the state, leading academics were openly highlighting the cause of music education and the discussion initiated by McMullin, who Boydell described as "a keen observer on musical subjects and an outspoken virulent critic of the official musical establishment", must be credited with stimulating this long overdue debate.²¹⁰

The MAI defended Boydell's article in a letter to the editor of *The Bell* on 17 January, 1951, arguing that Boydell's courageous article boldly expressed what Irish people had privately felt for many years and gave

...a much more acute picture of the condition of music in the country than was given by one of your correspondents in your November issue, who stated that music was in the healthiest state of all the arts in Ireland.²¹¹

The letter rehearsed characteristic MAI rhetoric regarding Ireland's backwardness as a musical nation stating that Dublin had no concert hall and that, outside Dublin, there was

orchestral and chamber music compositions and the increase in the number of Irish artists performing abroad. Ibid.

²⁰⁷ P.J. Malone, "Future of Music in Ireland," *The Bell* 17, no. 1 (April 1951): 11.

²⁰⁸ Joseph O'Neill, "Future of Music in Ireland," *The Bell* 17, no. 1 (April 1951): 17.

²⁰⁹ Copy of letter entitled, *Present State of Music in Ireland* written by Olive Smith (no date), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

²¹⁰ Boydell, *The Roaring Forties and Thereabouts*, 68.

²¹¹ Copy of letter from MAI honorary secretary to editor of *The Bell* on 17 January, 1951, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 26.

“literally no music taking place”.²¹² MAI employed Ireland’s independence as a means of convincing Irish people of their responsibility to address the country’s “lack of musical culture”.²¹³ Considering the predominantly Anglo-Irish make-up of the organisation, this strategy of apportioning responsibility or blame on Irish people rather than on Ireland’s former colonisers (as had been previously customary) is a novel approach by the MAI. Its arrogance in equating Ireland as “of no consequence whatever so far as music is concerned” and to being an uncultured people is outrageous and perhaps explains why Fleischmann, Malone and O’Neill were critical of Boydell’s initial article.²¹⁴

3.10 MAI Monthly Bulletin

The above-mentioned discussions and activities of the MAI were reported in its monthly bulletin, which first appeared in November, 1948. Council member, Anthony Hughes was its first editor and continued in this role for many years.²¹⁵

In response to the urgent need of keeping members informed of the activities of our Council, it is proposed to issue monthly bulletins, of which this is the first, [to provide] information of importance or interest to music lovers in Ireland, and occasional criticism of meritorious works and outstanding recitals. It is hoped eventually, to expand this bulletin into a music magazine which will be a responsible and well-informed journal for everyone interested in the welfare of music. We feel the absence of such a paper has long been a notorious deficiency in our musical life.²¹⁶

The first bulletin comprised of two printed pages and the layout was similar to minutes of a committee meeting which Charles Acton described as “gestetnered sheets”.²¹⁷ It kept members informed of upcoming concerts (particularly those featuring young Irish composers), festivals and competitions abroad, critiques of concerts, People’s College lectures, correspondence with international bodies, updates on the progress of the

²¹² Ibid. One wonders how Fleischmann reacted to this arbitrary statement.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Other editors included Dorothy Stokes, Edgar M. Deale, Máirtín McCullough and Jim Wilson.

²¹⁶ MAI, *Monthly Bulletin*, (November 1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34. At a Council meeting on 24 November 1948, it was decided not to make the bulletin available for sale to the general public. Also, at this meeting, objections were raised as to the inclusion of critiques in the bulletins. However, McMullin argued that the views expressed in the bulletins reflected that of the author and not that of the entire Association. MAI, 1948 *Honorary Secretary’s Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

²¹⁷ “End of a Magazine,” *The Irish Times*, 25 January, 1985.

Memorandum and concert dates.²¹⁸ The level of detail in the bulletins was impressive and members were kept abreast of developments in the Association at all levels. It is evident from an analysis of the early bulletins that openness and egalitarianism amongst committee members and ordinary members were important to the Association. However, one might question the purpose or, in fact, motive behind providing a confidential report of the meeting between the MAI and the Department of P&T on 25 October, 1948, to rank and file members of the Association.²¹⁹ Furthermore, was it crucially important to print the subsequent corrections to the report in detail in the December 1948 bulletin?²²⁰ The bulletin also published a critical commentary on the Cultural Relations Committee²²¹ whose first committee of sixteen members did not include a musician; the author wrote that the MAI

... deplore this unfortunate omission, although the committee is a very welcome innovation on the part of the Minister. Surely any foreign institution of learning or artistic tradition will find a committee for the promotion of cultural relations which excludes music at least incongruous, if not rather ridiculous.²²²

There were also some entertaining contributions to the bulletin. Francis J. Kelly's (MAI honorary secretary) observations on the 1949 Feis Ceoil deserve mention. He complained that the length of the Feis Ceoil's prizewinners' concert was unfair to audience and performers alike and he also noted that the standard of competitors "rarely rose above a respectable mediocrity."²²³ Kelly also found fault with inconsistent adjudicators; he claimed that one adjudicator awarded a gold medal to a baritone whom another adjudicator described as having "neither voice nor singing ability".²²⁴ The same adjudicator compared the baritone to John McCormack, whose voice she disliked and described as nasal; however, Kelly disagreed and surmised the adjudicator had listened to McCormack's recordings from 1940 only. The bulletins are littered with interesting morsels which provide valuable insights into the musical life of Dublin from the end of the 1940s and would merit a study in themselves.

²¹⁸ The bulletin also drew attention to the concert diary housed at McCullough's, Dawson Street, Dublin which was set up in order to avoid overlap of concert dates and thus splitting potential audiences. MAI Monthly Bulletin, November 1950, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34.

²¹⁹ The Report of the meeting was circulated to MAI members and marked confidential, MAI, *Monthly Bulletin*, November 1948, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34.

²²⁰ MAI, *Monthly Bulletin* (December 1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34.

²²¹ The Cultural Relations Committee (CRC), established in January 1949 was a non-statutory agency operating under the auspices of the Department of External Affairs.

²²² MAI, *Monthly Bulletin* (February 1949), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34.

²²³ MAI, *Monthly Bulletin* (June 1949), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34.

²²⁴ Ibid.

They fulfilled the MAI's goal of keeping members informed about all its activities and revealed a vociferous and fearless MAI unlike the posture it exhibited during its later years.

<p><u>Gen. Secy</u> J. O Sullivan, Ormeau, Newtownsmith, DUN LAOGHAIRE. Telephone: 86406</p>	<p>MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND</p> <p>Monthly Bulletin</p> <p>October, 1954.</p>	<p><u>Hon. Treasurer</u> Mrs. M. Smith, "Rockview" Terquay Road, FOXBOCK, Co. Dublin. Telephone : 83968</p>
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The seasonal musical activity is under way already and promises to be most attractive and interesting. Last Sunday week there was a performance of "The Dream of Gerontius" in the Capitol Theatre, Dublin, while from the Phoenix Hall, on the first Friday of the month, the R.E.S.O. performed (with Vanacek as soloist) Brian Boydell's Carolan prize-winning Violin Concerto. Congratulations to the composer. How he finds time to produce such important work and yet make his regular painstaking contribution to this Bulletin (see list of "Contemporary Works Performed" herewith) is a mystery. For the rest of the month there will be the reappearance of the 'Autumn Sunday Proms', a tour of the Provinces by the popular New London Quartet (and Dublin also; see Schedule), the Wexford Festival (extending into November) and, of course, the Winter Recitals at the R.D.S.

Before laying out the programme for the month (as far as any dates have been made known, through the Diary of Musical Events held by McCullough's Ltd. 56 Dawson Street, Dublin, and other informed channels) there are a few points calling for ventilation. Firstly, the Treasurer is (naturally!) appealing for funds to keep the affairs of the M.A.I. financed. Of some 70 members whom she reminded of the annual subscription only 30 responded; the other 40 would be most popular if they sent their "sub" right now!

Secondly, congratulations are due to Edgar Deale, Aloys Fleischmann, Frederick May and A. J. Petter on their election to the Performing Rights Society.

Thirdly, it was resolved at the last Council Meeting to give more publicity to those matters of importance discussed at meetings (where it is both proper and discreet to do so) in future issues of the Bulletin. This will be done whenever practicable.

Brian Boydell was invited as Irish Delegate to the International Conference in Edinburgh on "Youth and Music". Many points arose, which could be of great benefit to the encouragement of music in Ireland. There was a short broadcast discussion on those points in Radio Eireann's 'Music Magazine' on Sunday September 26th; and the Music Association Council has been informed of them. Three of the suggestions, the possibility of which is being considered by the M.A.I. Council are:

1. The encouragement of Musical activity throughout the country by means of Area Music Organisers - on the lines of the County Music organisers in England.
2. The benefit of forming in Ireland a branch of the International Organisation "Jeunesse Musicale" - known in England as "Youth and Music". Broadly speaking, this involves organising special concerts for young people, so as to encourage an active musical public.
3. The need for a permanent String Quartet in Ireland - one which is not tied to the Radio Station, but which is free to tour the country. Such a quartet could probably not make its own living. Where could a subsidy be found? (Edinburgh University supports a string quartet - and two of the Welsh universities have professional ensembles connected with the Music Faculty).

TALKS FROM R.E.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Oct. 9th</div> <div>9.30</div> <div>Frederick May "A Question of Taste"</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Each Monday at 7.15</div> <div>Joseph Groocock "At the Opera"</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Each Thursday at 11.15 p.m.</div> <div>Brian Boydell "The Growth of Lieder"</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Each Sunday at 2.30.</div> <div>"Broadcast Music of the Week"</div> </div> <div style="text-align: right;">Joseph Groocock, Carey Kert and Scirse Bodley.</div>
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Figure 8. MAI Monthly Bulletin (October 1954).

3.11 Conclusions

MAI was born into a time of considerable change in Ireland. On the one hand, the country was opening up to internationalism yet, on the other, it was still holding on to the ideal of an 'Irish Ireland'. Following the establishment of the Irish State in 1922, culture became "both a function of and a *source* of identity"²²⁵ and cultural activism evolved into a powerful agent of resistance in Ireland which led to it becoming "monist in its rhetoric".²²⁶ MAI sought to reject this approach and replace it with a more cosmopolitan identity. It set itself above contemporary cultural movements by ignoring Ireland's indigenous folk music and it viewed essentialist and epochalist ideologies with hostility. Its own ideology was rooted in Victorian attitudes and, in its quest to establish Ireland as a formidable musical nation, it looked exclusively to the European art music tradition. This explains why classical art music could not find traction among the majority. Though Marie McCarthy considers the MAI a subculture of Irish society and part of Ireland's developing cultural consciousness, Ireland during the late 1940s was not willing to embrace solely what Edward Said called the ideologies of the other cultural domain, namely, MAI's Victorian, purist ideology. Certainly, Irish people attended concerts by the R  SO and listened to classical music but the MAI's disregard for indigenous music, which was experiencing a considerable revival at this time, (CC  , Fleadh Ceoil na h-  ireann, Gael Linn, etc.) ensured its isolation from national supports. A more broad-minded approach to Irish art music, such as the one espoused by Fleischmann, could have ensured broader appeal for the MAI and garnered it deserved status as a worthy representative and advocate of music in Ireland.

According to Fleischmann, the first association to represent the music profession in Ireland was the Irish branch of the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM), established in 1893.²²⁷ Many of its objectives were similar to those of the MAI and many of ISM's objectives were replicated in the MAI's Memorandum. However, unlike the MAI, the ISM explored Irish themes in their lectures.²²⁸ Both the MAI and ISM sought to represent the

²²⁵ Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia, eds., *Edward Said* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 85.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Fleischmann, "Music and Society, 1850-1920," 514. The Incorporated Society of Musicians was founded in the UK in 1882. For further information on the Incorporated Society of Musicians see Edmund Bohan, *The ISM: The First Hundred Years* (London: The Incorporated Society of Musicians, 1982).

²²⁸ ISM's objectives were to raise teaching standards, to represent music teachers and musicians, to convene music examinations and to confer professional diplomas. It was well supported in Dublin by performers and the majority of the staff at the RIAM. Edmund Bohan, *The ISM: The First Hundred Years* (London: The

music profession in Ireland, to create a unified voice for music with a “unified purpose”.²²⁹ One umbrella organisation cannot represent all aspects of music; the individual, the community, various styles of music, music education, music teachers, professional musicians, amateur musicians, music students (theoretical and/or instrumental) and composers. Various attempts to establish umbrella organisations for music over the years have proved futile, namely the Forum for Music in Ireland, the Music Board of Ireland, etc. The discipline is too disparate and this leads to different voices vying for attention and representation within the same group. The task the MAI had set itself was, therefore, unreasonable, particularly as a voluntary group with limited funds.

For all this, what emerges from the Archive of the early MAI, is an organisation attempting to forge an identity, resolute in its purpose and energetic in the pursuit of its objectives. In forging a new identity, the MAI (unconsciously) followed the standard models for nation building. J.J. Lee observed that nationalism “invested a good deal of emotional and even intellectual effort in nurturing a self-image that presents the Irish as a peculiarly persecuted people.”²³⁰ In that context, one could argue that the MAI “invested a good deal of emotional and even intellectual effort in nurturing a self-image” that presented Irish art music “as a peculiarly persecuted” genre. The recurring theme of Ireland’s musical “backwardness” is symptomatic of early MAI rhetoric. Boydell and Fleischmann were, undoubtedly, aware of the standing of classical music in eighteenth and nineteenth century Ireland. Consequently, one might question the motive behind disregarding the musical achievements of our past and, in fact, one can speculate about the consequential dissension that may have arisen among Council members in this respect. McMullin justified his exaggeration of the condition of music in the Memorandum by its purpose of attracting greater attention. After his departure, this rhetoric continued; thus, one can conclude that it pervaded the general MAI policy and was not just the view of an individual.²³¹

Incorporated Society of Musicians, 1982), 5. According to Marie McCarthy, the ISM was criticised for being a UK based organisation embracing Irish interests; however, she points out that the Irish organisation was run by Irish musicians and many of its lectures were strongly nationalistic in flavour (unlike the MAI). Marie McCarthy, “The Transmission of Music and the Formation of National Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland,” in *The Maynooth International Musicological Conference 1995 Selected Proceedings: Part 2, Irish Musical Studies 5*, eds. Patrick F. Devine and Harry White (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), 153.

²²⁹ Boydell, *The Roaring Forties and Thereabouts*, 67.

²³⁰ Quoted in Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 236.

²³¹ MAI, 1948 *Honorary Secretary’s Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7, 3.

What is most important to remember about the early years of the Association is the zeal and urgency with which its members embraced the ethos and objectives of the new organisation. In the absence of government responsibility for the arts, voluntary groups such as the MAI were left with the task of developing Ireland's cultural awareness. MAI's Memorandum sparked a period of progressive musical debate on the future of music in Ireland; it brought the cause of music education to government attention and created a momentum for action. While acknowledging its faults, the Memorandum and the early efforts which it inspired, merit acknowledgement.

Chapter 4

Hearing the Voice of a Composer in a Changing Society

4.1 Introduction

The second objective of the MAI was to “improve conditions for composers and musicians generally.”²³² Considering the membership of its first Council, it is not surprising, from the outset, that the standing of the composer and the performance and publication of his/her works would figure prominently in its activities. The Association highlighted the limited performance opportunities for works by Irish composers at this time (an issue raised previously by Robert Prescott Stewart in the nineteenth-century) and, most importantly, it courageously sought to establish an Irish art music independent of the prevailing nationalist sentiment.

MAI was regarded as “a clique” who viewed classical music as their “personal prerogative”²³³ and it unashamedly pursued this superiority complex throughout its formative years. In describing itself as “a sufficiently authoritative and representative body of progressive musical opinion ... with more justice than any other existing body ... to speak on behalf of music as it affects this country”²³⁴ it excluded the efforts of other music organisations and individuals, thus asserting its collective authority. “Participation in music is a maker and a marker of identity”²³⁵ and participation in, and transmission of, any cultural activity or organisation reinforces group identity.²³⁶ Consequently, a certain level of social exclusion ensues, particularly in the high arts (possibly despite initial intentions of participating for the betterment of society). The transmission of culture articulates “differences between self and other” and sociocultural boundaries are established.²³⁷ In the case of the MAI, its perception as a “clique” and its exclusion of the native tradition limited its membership, performance and funding opportunities.

The challenge of expressing a national identity in compositions reflected a dilemma facing many composers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, not only in Ireland but

²³² MAI, *MAI Constitution* (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

²³³ Pine, *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland*, 127.

²³⁴ McMullin, “Conclusion,” 1.

²³⁵ McCarthy, *Passing It On*, 5.

²³⁶ Keali'inohomoku, “Culture Change: Function and Dysfunctional Expressions of Dance, A Form of Affective Culture,” 47.

²³⁷ Martin Stokes, ed., *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994), 7.

elsewhere in Europe and North America. While a number of Irish composers employed folk idioms in their works, a significant number of European composers, such as Grieg, Sibelius and Borodin, captured the character of their native country without employing folk melodies or motifs.²³⁸ MAI Council members, such as Boydell and May, had no desire to engage with Irish folk music or idiom and, consequently, the Association became increasingly focused on promoting contemporary Irish composers with an international rather than a national stylistic outlook. Fleischmann was also conscious of the necessity to locate his compositions firmly in a wider international context, but differed considerably from Boydell and May on the use of Irish idioms in compositions. By the mid 1940s, Boydell and Fleischmann had established themselves as prolific composers. They were important commentators on musical matters and, through the activities of the MAI, hoped to remove contemporary Irish music from its parochial setting and place it in an international context. The MAI's search for cultural authenticity was perhaps a little over-ambitious considering the time of its formation. Nonetheless, its efforts prepared the way for the younger generation of Irish composers who "focused outwardly, espoused wider international influences and adopted the aesthetics and techniques of the *avant-garde*."²³⁹

In this chapter, I will discuss the role played by the MAI in realising the vision of Boydell, Fleischmann and their musical contemporaries. By focusing on the activities of the MAI's Composers' Group (1953-1976) and the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music (1969-1984), I hope to illustrate the significant role played by the MAI in fostering talented Irish composers from 1948 to 1985. Most importantly, I will trace its contribution towards the creation of an infrastructure for Irish composers and contemporary composition.

4.2 Forging identities and nation building

The reconciliation of the "musical heritage of a traditional and colonial society with the music needs of a modern nation state" stimulated the MAI to forge a new identity for Irish composers.²⁴⁰ MAI composers sought an alternative means of expression to the prevailing nationalist *ethnie* and attempted to move away from cultural purism to cultural pluralism, from national to international. This perspective contradicts Said's view that "all cultures are involved

²³⁸ The writings of Richard Taruskin and Carl Dalhaus exemplify this point which is also cogently made by Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music* (New York: Norton, 1996), 668.

²³⁹ Seán Mac Liam, "Review of Séamas de Barra's *Aloys Fleischmann* (Dublin: Field Day Publications, 2006)," in *Journal of Irish Economic and Social History* 35 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008): 117.

²⁴⁰ McCarthy, *Passing It On*, 116.

in one another; none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic”.²⁴¹ Music’s role in Irish cultural consciousness was complicated by its potent symbolism²⁴² and it was this symbolism that the MAI sought to reject. However, Irish cultural consciousness is deeper; it is more complex, fragmented and changed considerably throughout pre and post independent Ireland.²⁴³ Prior to independence, Ireland’s identity was defined by collective anticolonialism; however, when independence was achieved, this no longer satisfied Ireland’s communal identity. Francis Stuart warned against “this rush to establish a communal identity” in newly independent colonies, arguing that a collective identity cannot be established²⁴⁴ and, more importantly, such an identity did not represent the identity or culture of the wider population.²⁴⁵ “Identity is fluid and opportunistic, rather than united and self-determined”.²⁴⁶ The separation of Irishness and Irish culture from “otherness” (while still identifying with the other), was a challenging task, especially for a group such as the MAI, whose main composers did not always agree on the level of separation required. The Association did not have a sufficient number of members composing competently in a modern style to establish a successful separatist movement. It did have a clear vision of its objectives, but May’s health problems and Fleischmann’s courting of both compositional styles left Boydell as the main protagonist supporting the transformation of Ireland’s cultural consciousness and musical identity.

The challenge of expressing a national identity in music was also experienced by American and European composers. Grout described the difficulties faced by composers, particularly from Eastern Europe who, reacting to the hegemony of German art music, incorporated folk idioms into their compositions and created music with a distinctively national dimension. He noted that composers

... instead of trying to absorb folk idioms into more or less conventional styles by smoothing out their irregularities and making them fit the rules of art music, came to

²⁴¹ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xxv.

²⁴² Helen O’Shea, *The Making of Irish Traditional Music* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008), 16.

²⁴³ O’Neill, “Lifting the Veil: The Arts, Broadcasting and Irish Society,” 6.

²⁴⁴ Quoted in Marie McCarthy, *Music Education and the Quest for Cultural Identity in Ireland 1831-1989* (PhD diss., University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1990), 267.

²⁴⁵ O’Shea, *The Making of Irish Traditional Music*, 9.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

respect the uniqueness and drew inspiration from these idioms to create new styles, to expand the tonal and rhythmic vocabulary.²⁴⁷

An example of this is the work of Zoltan Kodály who expressed his native Hungarian characteristics in his work. He argued that works of art

... that exert the most powerful influence throughout the world as a whole, are those that express most fully the national characteristics of the artist. Since it is in such works that the highest individual creative power manifests itself, it follows that there is no individual originality which is not rooted in some kind of national originality.²⁴⁸

In Ireland, a coterie of composers rebelled against musical nationalism and believed the future of music in Ireland lay in external cultural networks. Consequently, two apparently irreconcilable groups, namely champions of traditionalism and advocates for modernism, emerged. According to Fleischmann, the composer had

... to chose the vocabulary of a pre-war generation, contriving to make it personal, or else he [had] to plunge into the principles of Schonberg or Milhaud and let loose a series of atonal or polytonal profundities on the astonished ears of a public acclimatised to Moore.²⁴⁹

Irish artists and writers also expressed their frustrations at Irish social conservatism which manifested an atmosphere of isolation, non-cosmopolitanism and alienation.²⁵⁰ Seán Ó Faoláin articulated his disgust at the prevailing nationalist attitudes which existed in “this sleeping country, these sleeping fields, those sleeping villages.”²⁵¹ Frank O’Connor also captured the deep disillusionment felt by the artistic community in an article entitled, *The Future of Irish Literature* (1942). In the article, he lamented the cultural stagnation of the country and, unashamedly, pointed the finger of blame at Éamon de Valera.

²⁴⁷ Grout, *A History of Western Music*, 695-696.

²⁴⁸ László Eosze, *Zoltan Kodály: His Life and Work*, trans. Istvan Farkas and Gyula Gulyas (Budapest: Kossuth Printing, 1962), 88.

²⁴⁹ Fleischmann, “Composition and the Folk Idiom,” 41.

²⁵⁰ Irish social conservatism was particularly evident in the introduction of the Censorship Acts, Censorship of Films Act (1923) and the Censorship of Publications Act (1929) which gave powers to the Film Censor and the Minister of Justice, to censor offensive or indecent films and printed material. These acts, together with a motion to make divorce illegal (1925) deepened Irish repressiveness and “stunted the cultural and social development of a country which a protracted colonial mismanagement had left in desperate need of revival in both spheres.” Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922-2002*, 30. The theatre managed to escape the censorship laws, but its audience was quite vociferous in its objections to productions of inappropriate or immoral content.

²⁵¹ Seán Ó Faoláin, *Vive Moi!* (London: Hart-Davis, 1965) quoted in Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History 1922-2002*, 143.

After the successes of the Revolution ... Irish society began to revert to a type. All the forces that had made for national dignity, that had united Catholic, Protestant, aristocrats like Constance Markevicz, Labour revolutionists like Connolly and writers like AE, began to disintegrate rapidly, and Ireland became more than ever sectarian, utilitarian ... Every year that passed, particularly since de Valera's rise to power, has strengthened the grip of the gombeen man, of the religious secret societies ... of the illiterate censorships.²⁵²

De Valera's vision of a rural Catholic Gaelic Ireland stymied Ireland's social, economic and cultural developments in the 1930s and 1940s. He described the music of Ireland, namely traditional music, as being "of singular beauty ... characterized by perfection of form and variety of melodic content ... and our dance tunes – spirited and energetic, in keeping with the temperament of our people."²⁵³ With such a limited focus, it is little wonder that classical music received any official attention and, pertinent to this study, it explains why the MAI wished to break free from such cultural bondage. As Kennedy notes, only cultural initiatives from which economic benefit could be derived would "win political and bureaucratic acceptance"²⁵⁴ and it is in this context that issues facing Irish composers at this time need to be understood.

4.3 Towards a musical infrastructure for Irish composers

The MAI believed that it could effect positive change in the status of Irish composers and in attitudes towards contemporary Irish compositions. To this end, it sought the establishment of a musical infrastructure for composers where financial security, artistic freedom and social acceptance could be secured. It wished to unite musical creativity, offer creative and organisational support to composers, promote the work of contemporary composers and generate interest in modern music. Figure 9 (my model) identifies six important issues which MAI composers believed were fundamental in cementing a network for composers.

²⁵² Frank O'Connor, "The Future of Irish Literature," *Horizon* 5, no. 25 (January 1942): 56-57.

²⁵³ Maurice Moynihan, ed., *Speeches and Statements by Eamon de Valera 1917-73* (Dublin: 1980) quoted in Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 31.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.



Figure 9. Towards a Musical Infrastructure for Irish Composition

The activities of the MAI in the late 1940s/early 1950s centred around addressing issues such as the lack of performance opportunities for contemporary composers, access to publishing firms, the encouragement and training of young composers in modern techniques and establishing connections with international associations. “The composer creates, the performer re-creates and then interprets, and the musical listener responds musically within the limits of his creative power”, but each is dependent on a secure foundation for the other to thrive.²⁵⁵

Through the cosmopolitan influences and philosophies of composers such as Fleischmann and Boydell, the MAI was well positioned to create a new, modern Irish musical

²⁵⁵ Carl Emil Seashore, *Psychology of Music* (New York: Dover, 1967), 373.

style and school of composition.²⁵⁶ Fleischmann, an enigmatic figure in respect of his views and musical style, sought to create a compositional style that would “embody all technique that contemporary music” could boast while at the same time “be rooted in the folk-music spirit”.²⁵⁷ In the aftermath of colonialism and World War II, namely the epochalist period, composers in Ireland grappled for self-definition. According to Geertz, in this final phase of decolonisation, the new state defines itself in terms of other states.²⁵⁸ Fleischmann poked fun at the paucity of opportunities for Irish composers, who he believed had an advantage over contemporary poets or novelists, in that standards

... in music may be at zero level, the appreciative public may be of negligible proportions, but the composer is at any rate spared the appalling problem as to whether he will write in Irish or in English, whether he will join the Neo-Anglo-Irish group or their adversaries.²⁵⁹

The intransigence suggested here by Fleischmann hints at the collective frustration of composers who, by that stage, wished to break free from the prevailing insular, national sentiment.²⁶⁰ In 1936, Fleischmann commented that “nothing fetters the process of composition more than the consciousness of scowling canons from some antique creed.”²⁶¹ His essay ‘Composition and the Folk Idiom’ delineated his ideology on the creation of a national style of composition. Here he expressed the view that the composer

... may come under the influence of some passing style, but this influence will as easily be French as it will English ... It can be the composer’s task ... to express the soul of that elusive entity in the nation’s being, call it the hidden Ireland or what you will - it is yet an exile from its rightful place, awaiting, perhaps, the composer to place it there.²⁶²

What differentiates Fleischmann from Boydell is the desired level of disengagement from Irish idioms and, perhaps, this together with the enormous task of preparing his *Symposium* (1952),

²⁵⁶ Though Frederick May was a founder member of the MAI and “the pioneer of Irish musical modernism by being the first composer to evade the folk music trap”, his contribution to the MAI was negligible and does not merit discussion here. Philip Graydon, “Modernism in Ireland and its Cultural Context in the Music of Frederick May, Brian Boydell and Aloys Fleischmann,” in *Irish Music in the Twentieth Century: Irish Musical Studies* 7, ed. Gareth Cox and Axel Klein (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 56.

²⁵⁷ Fleischmann, “The Outlook of Music in Ireland,” 124.

²⁵⁸ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 238.

²⁵⁹ Fleischmann, “Composition and the Folk Idiom,” 44.

²⁶⁰ Harry White, *The Progress of Music in Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 17-18.

²⁶¹ Fleischmann, “Composition and the Folk Idiom,” 44.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

explains why Fleischmann did not figure as prominently as one might have expected after the initial euphoria of the fledgling MAI had settled.²⁶³

Brian Boydell proved to be an influential figure in the Association and it was his singular vision of contemporary Irish composition which mostly prevailed. Because of his English education, his accent and lack of knowledge of the Irish language, Boydell felt he was not accepted as a true Irishman with the result that he “ended up with a distaste for all aspects of nationalist fervour” which he believed to be a product of nationalist propaganda.²⁶⁴ He was deeply aware of the negative effects and shortcomings of our national insularity and feared it hindered musical development. By background, education and musical experiences in London and Heidelberg, he had acquired an extrovert and cosmopolitan outlook and regarded himself as “a cosmopolitan Irishman of eclectic interests.”²⁶⁵ This cosmopolitanism affected his compositional style and shaped his vehement disavowal of the trend of musical nationalism where composers employed Irish idioms to make their compositions sound ‘Irish’. The simple folk arrangements of Charles Villiers Stanford or Hamilton Harty, which enjoyed consistent popularity in the first half of the twentieth century, were often perceived to be an unequal marriage of art and folk musics. In fact, Boydell described the evolution of his style as an antithesis to “the Stanford-Harty Anglo-Irish tradition”.²⁶⁶ He was one of the first Irish composers to challenge the essentialist and isolationist ideologies prevalent in Ireland at the time of his return to the country at the beginning of the Second World War. He was of the view that the ideology of musical nationalism placed composers, who might otherwise wish to embrace modernism, in a musical *cul de sac*.

On the other hand, Joseph Ryan observed that the use of the traditional idiom was “unsuited as the basis for a school of extended composition”.²⁶⁷ There was, in a sense, a musical

²⁶³ It should be noted that Fleischmann’s level of engagement or disengagement from Irish idioms vacillated but he never approached the level espoused by Boydell and other MAI members.

²⁶⁴ Boydell, *The Roaring Forties and Thereabouts*, 6.

²⁶⁵ Graydon, “Modernism in Ireland and its Cultural Context in the Music of Frederick May, Brian Boydell and Aloys Fleischmann,” 65.

²⁶⁶ Charles Acton, “Interview with Brian Boydell,” *Éire-Ireland* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1970), 104.

²⁶⁷ Joseph J. Ryan, “Nationalism and Irish Music,” in *Music and Irish Cultural History: Irish Musical Studies 3*, eds. Gerard Gillen and Harry White (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), 110.

“battle between two civilisations”²⁶⁸: one that believed music could be used to create a distinctively national style and another, like Boydell and May, who avoided the “folk music trap”²⁶⁹ and aspired to create music in a universal style. Thus, the MAI was creating its own social ‘in group’ and applied typical negative stereotypes to the ‘out group’, i.e. those who employed national idioms in their compositions. MAI outrageously described this ‘out group’ as lacking culture and imagination.²⁷⁰ This viewpoint was not wholly dissimilar to Schönberg’s disapproval of the practice of absorbing folk music into classical music. Schönberg developed a unique system of musical organisation and he believed that a

... composer – a real creator – composes only if he has something to say which has not yet been said and which he feels must be said: a musical message to music-lovers. Under what circumstances can he feel the urge to write something that has already been said, as it has in the case of the static treatment of folk songs?²⁷¹

There was no doubting the MAI’s compositional vision and this attitude impacted on its efforts to represent composers at national level. In eschewing folk music, the MAI could only aspire to represent a minority of composers. Nevertheless, the challenges it faced were not insurmountable; as soon as a composers’ collective was in place, MAI believed that other composers would follow its separatist endeavours. However, a meaningful musical experience could only be created if three essential elements were secure, namely, the composer, the performer and the audience and each component depended on the other.

4.4 An audience for contemporary music

The MAI wished to create a musical environment wherein issues facing composers could be addressed but, as expressed in its objectives and Memorandum, these endeavours were reliant on the creation of a musically educated audience who could understand and appreciate contemporary Irish music (in a European aesthetic). The musical appetite of Irish concert goers received serious criticism in John F. Larchet’s ‘Plea for Music’ in 1924. Larchet stated that the

²⁶⁸ The Battle of Two Civilisations is the title of a chapter in D.P. Moran’s, *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1905).

²⁶⁹ Graydon, “Modernism in Ireland and its Cultural Context in the Music of Frederick May, Brian Boydell and Aloys Fleischmann,” 56.

²⁷⁰ Preparatory notes for Memorandum sent by Olive Smith to J. McCann (former Lord Mayor) and to An Taoiseach on 5 July, 1951, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

²⁷¹ Leonard Stein, ed. and Leo Black trans., *Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schönberg* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 165.

root of Dublin's inability to cultivate an appreciative audience lay in the fact that Dubliners "have never been taught to do so."²⁷² "Music to the vast majority of Dubliners, means songs, and nothing else."²⁷³ Further, he claimed that an audience's *penchant* for popular ballads (which Larchet described as "the worst class of music") and light Italian and French opera from the nineteenth-century hindered its knowledge of major orchestral works of the twentieth century.²⁷⁴

Except for occasional visits from some of the English orchestras, there has been no performance of any importance or educative value in Dublin for ten years. This means that most of the people have no knowledge of Strauss, Brahms and the great volume of modern orchestral music. Few are acquainted with any important works of later date than Wagner's "Ring of the Nibelungen."²⁷⁵

The situation was ameliorated with RÉ's public symphony concert series at the Mansion House, Dublin (1941-1943) and the Capitol Theatre, Dublin (1943-47) which introduced Irish audiences to Stravinsky, Sibelius and Debussy;²⁷⁶ however, concert programmes rarely featured contemporary Irish music in a European aesthetic. This predicament presented the MAI with the major challenge of transforming Irish musical tastes to what it believed befitted the Irish cultural consciousness. The singer and *Irish Independent* music critic, Joseph O'Neill was of a similar view; he stated that Irish people had "a superficial love of music" which "must be both simple and familiar."²⁷⁷ At one level, O'Neill's generalised 'slight' against Irish people is exaggerated and offensive; however, at another level, it is difficult to refute his claim, because, the "simple and familiar" or predictability are characteristics of popular music. It begs the question: why did a minority of people believe their preference for the high arts should be imposed on others? Instead of adopting a condescending tone, the MAI and other individuals should have concentrated more on building up a regular musical audience for concerts (as outlined in its Memorandum) and gradually ensure that audiences were exposed to Irish as well as foreign contemporary music.

The fractious relationship between audiences and contemporary compositions was not a uniquely Irish problem; Stravinsky's premier of the *Rite of Spring* in Paris in 1913 and Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* sextet in 1902 resulted in riots. The poor reception of such works

²⁷² Larchet, "A Plea for Music," *The Voice of Ireland*, 509.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 508.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ Brown, *Ireland, A Social and Cultural History: 1922-2002*, 197.

²⁷⁷ O'Neill, "Music in Dublin," 260.

led Arnold Schönberg to establish *Verein für Musikalische Privataufführungen*/Society for Private Performances in Vienna in 1918 which provided carefully rehearsed performances of modern music to discerning audiences.²⁷⁸ The concept which “stood in stark opposition to Vienna's ‘official’ concert life” was replicated in Prague and other European cities and could have proved an interesting model for Dublin’s modern music coterie. Nevertheless, the MAI felt that one of the most appropriate ways of developing composition in Ireland was to connect with other composers’ groups in the UK and beyond with a view to establishing a similar group in Ireland.²⁷⁹

4.5 Establishing links with foreign composers’ groups

In its efforts to establish itself as the Irish representative body for composers and as the “only representative body solely dedicated with the advancement of music in this country,”²⁸⁰ the MAI contacted two UK based composers’ organisations, the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) and the Committee for the Promotion of New Music (CPNM). MAI wrote to the ISCM in July 1948 with the intention of establishing links between both organisations and, ultimately, arranging exchange performances between Ireland and the UK. Affiliation with the ISCM would “ensure that at least one Irish work would be played at each annual festival” of the ISCM and this was a valuable tool in propagating the work of contemporary Irish composers abroad.²⁸¹ Aloys Fleischmann described the connection with the ISCM as a positive step towards “breaking our disastrous isolation in music” and the move received the support of all MAI members.²⁸² It was also important as the MAI adopted many of the ISCM’s objectives and ideas when forming its own Composers’ Group in 1953. According to promotional material sent to the MAI, the ISCM aimed

²⁷⁸ Membership of the Society was open to composers of all genre of modern music and it presented 353 performances between 1918 and 1921. Charles Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg* (New York: Viking Press 1975), 65. Concert programmes were not announced until just before the concerts “in order to forestall absences of those who would not wish to hear this or that”. Felix Meyer, “Anton Webern's Six Pieces for Orchestra, op. 6, Arrangement for Chamber Ensemble,” Moldenhauer Archives at the Library of Congress <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/moldenhauer/2428156.pdf> (accessed 10 April, 2012).

²⁷⁹ Considering the numerous references to musical practices in Finland in the MAI’s Memorandum: *Music and the Nation*, it is curious that no connections were made between the two countries. In fact, apart from contacting two organisations in the UK, it would appear the MAI did not seek to make connections with other similar international music organisations.

²⁸⁰ Summary of Activities (1948), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Quoted in Klein, “Brian Boydell: Of Man and Music,” 9.

... to make known the best new music of all countries, by means of performances ... as well as by theoretical explanation, where necessary. The job is twofold – national and international. The latter is dealt with by the Society’s annual international festival and by the interchange of information, etc. between sections. In the national domain, the task is to discover and foster the talent of young composers, especially such as are struggling to find individual expression; and to make sure that the public is sufficiently and accurately informed about the chief trends in contemporary music in general.²⁸³

The second composers’ group contacted by the MAI in 1948 was the CPNM in London. Michael McMullin (MAI honorary secretary) contacted Lawrence Leonard, secretary of the CPNM with a view to exchanging new works or securing performances of contemporary Irish works. Founded in 1943, the aim of the CPNM was “to help the young or unknown composer by giving performances of his work”; however, unlike the MAI, the CPNM welcomed “all good work in whatever style or school” and pledged to “avoid all cliques”.²⁸⁴ Despite initial enthusiastic responses from the Committee, the MAI’s limited resources and the absence of state funded bodies, such as the Cultural Relations Committee (1949) and the Arts Council (1951), hampered any serious attempt to engage fully with that organisation. Consequently, little progress was made during the early years of the Association, beyond initial contacts.²⁸⁵ However, these communications underline the early aspirations of the MAI towards becoming a major, national representative body for music, with particular emphasis on the promotion of composers. Despite MAI’s narrow views on compositional style and mindful of the limited number of Irish composers interested and capable of composing in a modern style at that time, this was an ambitious goal.

4.6 Cultural Relations Committee

The defeat of de Valera’s Fianna Fáil government in February 1948, heralded a new era for Irish politics and, in particular, arts policy in Ireland. MAI’s creativity and flexibility in

²⁸³ Letter from ISCM to the MAI on 1 August, 1948, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7. The ISCM was founded in 1922 and based at the offices of Novello and Co. Ltd., 160, Wardour Street, London W. 1. For further information on the ISCM see <http://www.iscm.org> (accessed 4 July, 2010).

²⁸⁴ Hugo Wood, “SPNM 20,” *The Musical Times* 104, no. 1448 (October 1963): 708.

²⁸⁵ Opportunities such as a possible exchange programme with the Stichting Donemus Institute of Amsterdam could have been rewarding for the MAI, but its facilities and resources were not adequate to fund return concerts. The society had arranged a concert of Dutch and English chamber music in London. IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7. The Committee for the Promotion of New Music was also known as the Society for the Promotion of New Music and was founded in 1943. For further information on this organisation see, *The Concise Dictionary of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

response to this new dynamic environment would prove vital for its future direction. The epochalist period was more conducive than the previous static environment to the realisation of MAI's objectives and this period marked the beginning of a state-funded cultural infrastructure. The newly elected inter-party Government, under the leadership of John A. Costello, facilitated the formation of the Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland (CRC) in January 1949,²⁸⁶ a non-statutory agency under the auspices of the Department of External Affairs (see fig. 10).

Cultural Relations Committee

An official statement says that the Minister for External Affairs has appointed the following committee to advise him on schemes for the promotion and development of cultural relations with other countries: Mr. Justice Gavan Duffy, President of the High Court (chairman); Senator Michael Hayes (vice-chairman); Professor Seamus O Duilearga; Dr. Richard Hayes (film censor); Mrs. Maura Lavery; Senator Patrick MacCartan, M.D.; Mrs. Eileen MacCarvill, M.A., H.Dip.Ed.; Mr. John MacDonagh; Roger McHugh, Ph.D.; Mr. Thomas McGreevy; Senator E. A. McGuire; Mrs. Josephine McNeill; Professor T. W. Moody, F.T.C.D.; Mr. Liam O Laoghaire; The O'Rahilly, Barrister-at-Law; Michael Scott, M.R.I.A.I.

Miss S. G. Murphy, First Secretary, Department of External Affairs, will act as secretary.

The committee's function is to further the development of our cultural relations with other countries and to make available in those countries information on every aspect of our national cultural life. It will examine and make recommendations to the Minister on schemes and proposals for the attainment of these objectives. Its first meeting was held in Iveagh House on Thursday.

Figure 10. "Cultural Relations Committee," *Irish Press*, 30 January, 1949.

Seán MacBride, Minister of External Affairs, constituted a voluntary CRC Committee of fourteen members to "further the development of cultural relations with other countries and to make available in those countries information on every aspect of our national cultural life".²⁸⁷ Since, at this time, Irish culture was beginning to attract state attention and support, all forms of

²⁸⁶ Also known as the Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations. For an account of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations see <http://www.cultureireland.gov.ie> (accessed 9 September, 2011).

²⁸⁷ "Cultural Relations Committee," *Irish Independent*, 30 January, 1949.

art were perceived less in terms of their intrinsic authentic value and more as symbolic of a new national confidence and cultural assertiveness. Art, musical composition, literature etc. were perceived by the governing authorities in Ireland as emblematic of the very independence of the State in a modern world. In these circumstances, culture became an important agent for self-definition in “the social reconstruction that followed the ending of World War II”.²⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the CRC’s formation was opportune for the MAI who aspired to represent music’s interests on the Committee and believed the CRC could “enrich our objectives, promote creativity and self-expression and expand culture in Ireland”.²⁸⁹ The CRC consisted of five sub-committees responsible for fine arts, music, literature, film and visual arts policy; each sub-committee immediately undertook the publication of a series of pamphlets detailing Irish life and culture.²⁹⁰

The CRC, a centralised cultural organisation, evolved in a dynamic environment affected by political and social changes and broadened its definition of culture to include subcultures in society. In its first year, it received a grant in aid of £10,000 to fund its activities. These included representation at the International Folk Music Congress and the Festival in Venice in September 1949,²⁹¹ the compilation of a collection of two and three-part settings of Irish folk songs for distribution abroad (in collaboration with the DoE) and a limited guarantee against loss for the Dublin Grand Opera Society’s (DGOS) staging of performances by the Hamburg State Opera.²⁹² In supporting the DGOS, the CRC signalled its intent to bring European art music within its ambit of influence, nor would it limit its support specifically to traditional genres or Irish music with a national sentiment, as had been the case with pre-independent cultural bodies. This gave the MAI reason to hope that its activities might receive State support.

²⁸⁸ Denis O’Sullivan, *Cultural Politics and Irish Education since the 1950s* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2005), 245.

²⁸⁹ IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ Irish representation at the Festival was led by Donal O’Sullivan, who read a paper on Irish Folk Music and Dance, Séamus Ennis compiled the programmes, which included performances by Máirín Ní Shúilleabháin (singer) and Tomás Breathnach (dancer). CRC, *First Annual Report on the Activities of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations* (27 January, 1949 - 31 March, 1950), presented to both Houses of the Oireachtas by the Minister of External Affairs, Public Stationery Office, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

Aware of the UK's Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts²⁹³ funding of the CPNM's concerts of promising composers, the MAI believed that a similar arrangement could be established in Ireland. Edgar Deale contacted Miss S. G. Murphy, secretary of the CRC in February, 1949 to:

- seek funding for its activities
- become music advisors to the CRC's music committee²⁹⁴
- highlight the difficulties faced by Irish composers of 'serious music' and their relative anonymity abroad and in the UK, in particular.²⁹⁵

Of these three aims, it was the final one which first came to fruition. The MAI's main interest at this time focused on the formation of concrete proposals to address difficulties encountered by Irish composers; these included the establishment of a school of composition and the formation and funding of a body to promote and publish the music of contemporary Irish composers.²⁹⁶ Deale pointed out that some publishing houses published a token amount of music out of altruism or "as a gesture towards the art" but this was randomly judged and discouraged composers from attempting to earn a living from their craft.²⁹⁷ A meeting between the MAI and the music sub-committee of the CRC was eventually convened on 10 November, 1949, at which the MAI's proposal to create two panels of adjudicators to examine unpublished works by contemporary Irish composers was enthusiastically welcomed by the CRC.²⁹⁸

By October 1950, following a long period of inertia, an unpaid panel, consisting of Brian Boydell, Arthur Duff, Elizabeth MacConchy, Joseph Grocock, Ina Boyle, William Watson, Aloys Fleischmann, John F. Larchet and Fachtna Ó h-Annracháin was invited to serve as the

²⁹³ Later known as the Arts Council of Great Britain.

²⁹⁴ MAI, Memo dated 25 February, 1949, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

²⁹⁵ The "thinness" of musical publishing in Ireland and the lack of commissions for composers was also addressed by Frederick May in various articles in the late 1940s and 1950s. May cited the chief music publishers as Government Publication/An Gúm (1930), Pigott and Co. Ltd. (1823), Walton and Co. Ltd. (1872) and Foillseacháin Feis Átha Cliath (1941) who published original and traditional arrangements for voice, choir and instruments. May, "The Composer in Ireland," in *Music in Ireland: A Symposium*, 176.

²⁹⁶ Letters sent by the MAI on 26 May and 17 June 1949 to the CRC, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ An Irish panel was envisaged by the MAI to examine the compositions, consisting of leading contemporary composers, such as, Aloys Fleischmann, J. F. Larchet, Brian Boydell, William Watson, Joseph Grocock and Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair; and a foreign panel including Charles Munch, Eugene Ormandy, Steuart Wilson, Arnold Bax, Jean Martinon, Edmond Appia, Sixten Eckerberg and Daag Wiren. Copy of a letter from Dr. A. Farrington (MAI honorary secretary) to Murphy (CRC) on 4 February, 1950, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

national panel to assess compositions submitted in the preliminary round. A second panel, consisting of Arnold Bax, Jean Martinon and Daag Wiren, served as a foreign panel and received remuneration for their efforts.²⁹⁹ Advertisements were placed in various newspapers in Dublin, Cork and Belfast inviting Irish composers to submit their works for assessment and publication under the joint scheme for copying administered by the MAI and the CRC. The call for compositions received a good response with twenty-seven works submitted by Irish composers over the following months. By March 1952, the national panel had whittled down the works to nine compositions which were submitted to the international panel (see Table 4.1)

Table 4.1. Shortlist of Works Received by the CRC and Accepted for Publication

Composer	Title	Orchestration
Brian Boydell	<i>In Memoriam Mahatma Gandhi</i> Five Settings of poems by James Joyce	chamber orchestra baritone and piano
Aloys Fleischmann	Overture <i>The Four Masters</i> Song Cycle <i>The Fountain of Magic</i>	orchestra voice and piano
Frederick May	<i>Lyric Movement</i> <i>Scherzo</i>	string orchestra orchestra
William Rea	<i>Introduction, Fugue and Pastoral</i>	orchestral
Ernest de Regge	<i>Ave Maria</i>	vocal
Edgar Deale	<i>Pageant of Human Life</i>	choral

Source: Information derived from IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

With the exception of de Regge's *Ave Maria*, May's *Scherzo* and Deale's *Pageant of Human Life*, the international panel recommended all other works for immediate publication. The copying of selected works took considerably longer than expected and publication was not completed until 1955, almost four years after the idea was initially proposed.

On completion of the project, the CRC expressed interest in participating in similar schemes with the MAI in the future;³⁰⁰ however, the next collaboration did not occur until 1963 when the MAI approached the CRC to sponsor a catalogue of works by Irish composers. Though

²⁹⁹ Letter from Murphy (CRC) to Farrington (MAI) on 16 May, 1950, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³⁰⁰ Grocock, *A General Survey of Music in the Republic of Ireland*, 81.

the joint copying scheme achieved its objective of promoting the works of contemporary Irish composers, one would question the ultimate success of the venture, in particular, the publication of works by Boydell and Fleischmann, who were already established Irish composers and who had opportunities, through the Dublin Orchestral Players and the Cork Symphony Orchestra, to have their compositions performed. One could also query the wisdom of appointing Boydell and Fleischmann to adjudicate (objectively) on their own compositions. Undoubtedly, the most significant achievement of the scheme was that it laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Composers' Group by the MAI in 1953.³⁰¹

4.7 The MAI Composers' Group

Representation for composers had been a key objective of the MAI since its inception. One of the first meetings of composers organised by the MAI was held on 30 October, 1949, and was poorly attended. However, the "large number of enthusiastic letters received from those who were unable to attend" was interpreted as a signal of support for the establishment of a national representative body for composers.³⁰² Accordingly, on 9 November, 1949, Boydell wrote to forty-one composers, inviting them and their composer friends to join the Association and outlined the possible aims of a composers' representative group.³⁰³ However, it took another four years before the MAI Composers' Group was formed in 1953 with Brian Boydell as chairman and A.J. Potter as chief organiser. The precedent for the formation of a group representing composers was established as early as 1919 with the establishment of a group called the Society of Irish Composers;³⁰⁴ in the 1930s, the Irish Authors' and Composers' Association was established with Seán Hynes as president.³⁰⁵

Challenges faced by Irish composers, such as the lack of performance opportunities, publication of their work and pay, were also experienced by composers in Europe and the USA. Composers' circles were united by a commonality of purpose and sought security, camaraderie and a sense of community in membership of a group or collective organisation. "Collective organization ... shaped the production of new music, as many composers realized the necessity of

³⁰¹ MAI, *Summary of MAI/CRC Joint Copying Scheme*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³⁰² Copy of a letter sent by Brian Boydell to forty-one composers on 9 November, 1949, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ "Society of Irish Composers," *Irish Independent*, 24 December, 1919.

³⁰⁵ "Lack of interest in Irish Music," *Irish Independent*, 23 March, 1937.

solidarity in confronting the increased marginalization of their works.”³⁰⁶ In response to these needs, a number of organisations, committed to the promotion of new music were formed such as, the Society for Private Performances,³⁰⁷ The Six,³⁰⁸ International Composers’ Guild (1921-1927), League of Composers (1923-1954), Henry Cowell’s New Music Society (1925-1936) and the Union of Soviet Composers (1932-1957). These organisations provided an outlet for living composers and brought artists and composers together through shared interests and problems.

The Composers’ Group and the MAI’s Chamber Music Group (founded in December 1952) joined forces to form the Contemporary Music Group and, for the first time, this provided an opportunity for Irish composers to have their works performed and appraised by an audience of their peers and other discerning individuals.³⁰⁹ The purpose of this fruitful merger was to emulate to some extent what was already available to composers abroad by the activities of the League of Composers, the CPMN and similar organisations in other countries.³¹⁰ Although the success of the CPNM could not be replicated in Ireland, nonetheless, by the early 1950s, improvements in the musical infrastructure (e.g. the establishment of the AC and the RÉSO, etc.) gave reason to hope that, at last, the cultural life of the country was beginning to open up

... to ideas and influences from abroad that would bear on its future life as a largely urbanized society concerned to define itself not predominantly in terms of its local past but in relation as well to the economic, social, and political developments of contemporary European history.³¹¹

At this time, there was some hope that the MAI’s objective of improving conditions for composers could be realised, even allowing for the restricted membership of the Composers’ Group, its relatively small musical output and the limited scope of its activities. However,

³⁰⁶ David Metzger, “The League of Composers: The Initial Years,” *American Music* (Spring 1997): 45.

³⁰⁷ The Society for Private Performances/*Verein für Musikalische Privataufführungen* (1919-1921) was founded by Arnold Schönberg and organised concerts of modern music in Vienna.

³⁰⁸ The Six/Les Six was the name given to French composers, Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc and Germaine Tailleferre by the critic, Henri Collet.

³⁰⁹ The Contemporary Music Group was established with its own committee, chairman and secretary and a member’s donation helped the group set up a library of chamber music. They organised weekend events at An Grianán, Co. Louth from 1958 and also presented a Silver Cup to the Feis Ceoil for Chamber Music Ensemble.

³¹⁰ The CPNM organised sixty concerts, featuring 450 works by nearly 100 composers in its first two years (1943-1944) and performances were followed by open discussion on the works by audience members. Performers provided their services free and four prominent orchestras performed for nominal fees. Mosco Carner, “The Committee for the Promotion of New Music,” *The Musical Times* 86, no. 1232 (October 1945): 297.

³¹¹ Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-2002*, 198.

regardless of its capacity, the Composers' Group had clarity of focus and a tenacity of approach in the pursuit of its mission to establish a centre where live and recorded performances of contemporary Irish music could be experienced.³¹² These qualities were most obvious in its earliest activities.

4.8 Early activities of the MAI Composers' Group

From the outset, the emphasis of the MAI's Composers' Group was on the performance and recording of recent works by Irish composers. The initial efforts of the group focused on the organisation of a series of four lunchtime concerts in November/December 1954, which provided a platform for the performance of new Irish works. These concerts were held at the Graduates' Memorial Building, Trinity College Dublin (TCD) with musicians providing their services *pro bono*. Table 4.2 below indicates the diverse repertoire of compositions from established and promising young composers included in the programmes.³¹³

³¹² This aspiration was not realised until the foundation of the Contemporary Music Centre in 1985.

³¹³ MAI, 1954 MAI Council Report, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 20.

Table 4.2. Lunchtime Concerts Held at the Graduates' Memorial Building, TCD

1954	Programme	Performers
12 November	Songs by Arnold Bax, Frederick May, Charles Villiers Stanford, Daniel McNulty and Rhoda Coghill ³¹⁴	Patricia Thomas (mezzo soprano) Frederick May (piano)
19 November	<i>Six Songs from Antrim</i> (A.J. Potter) <i>Five Epigrams</i> and <i>Sonatine</i> (John Reidy) Songs by Herbert Hughes	A.J. Potter (bass), John O'Sullivan (piano) John Reidy (Seán Ó Riada) (piano)
26 November	<i>Cré</i> <i>Deireadh Fómhair</i> Paidir I and II <i>Scherzo for Piano</i> Marches Capriccio No. 1 1 st movement from Piano Sonata in B (all by Seóirse Bodley) and poems read by Seán Mac Réamuinn	Ruth Ticher (violin) Tomas Ó Suilleabháin (baritone) Seóirse Bodley (piano) Seán MacRéamuinn (recitations)
3 December	<i>Divertimento for Three Music Makers</i> String Quartet No. 1 <i>Five Settings of Poems by James Joyce</i> (all by Brian Boydell) and poems read by Seán Mac Réamuinn	Tomás Ó Suilleabháin (baritone) Wilhemina Sjoer (violin) Noel Jameson (violin) May Lord (viola) Betty Barrett (cello) Brian Boydell (oboe) Henry Dagg (clarinet) Christopher Haughey (bassoon) Joseph Groocock (piano) Seán Mac Réamuinn (recitations)

Source: Information derived from concert flyers at IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

In general, the series was deemed a success and critics applauded the endeavour and the compositions. The programming for the first two concerts is notable for its inclusion of composers such as Stanford, Hughes and McNulty; considering the Composers' Group's bias towards internationalism, this is puzzling but it may simply reflect the small output available from which to choose programme items. Further, the absence of works by Fleischmann is significant; though his work may have been intended for a subsequent series (of which there is no mention). Regardless of these oversights, the series marked the emergence of one young composer (Seóirse Bodley) who, in time, would attempt to bridge the folk music/modernism

³¹⁴ Songs titles not specified in programme.

divide and, at 19 years, had sufficient talent and output to present a concert of his own music. The critic at Seoirse Bodley's concert on 26 November, 1954, deemed it to be the highlight of the series and commented that Bodley's work signalled a welcome departure from musical nationalism and was

... neither another late plodder in the footsteps of the folk-song enthusiasts, suffering from chromatic fever, nor a creaking imitator of fashionable modes. From his music it is clear that he has learned from Hindemith and Bartók, but what he has learned has served merely to feed and cultivate his own music thinking ... One hopes very sincerely for chances to hear more of this music. Ireland has too few young composers of real promise to neglect them.³¹⁵

As "a forum for the discussion of scores and recordings of fellow members", the Composers' Group often dispensed with formalities and arranged concerts and record sessions at the homes of various members.³¹⁶ On 16 April, 1955, the composer, Ina Boyle³¹⁷ hosted a concert by the MacNaughton String Quartet,³¹⁸ at her house in Bushey Park, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow.³¹⁹ Other events organised by the group included record sessions at which members selected from Brian Boydell's audio collection of nearly fifty works by ten Irish composers.³²⁰ The genesis of the group was, no doubt, influenced by Boydell's experience as a member of the 'Echo Club' at Cambridge University, a group which came together to discuss and perform compositions by students.³²¹ Members of the Echo Club listened to the latest "cult works", after which "a period of meditation would follow during which no one would breathe a word that might disturb the magic spell."³²² The opportunity to critique each other's work was also an integral part of the CPNM and League of Composers but it alienated potential audiences and created a sense of elitism.

³¹⁵ "Impressive Contributions to Recitals," *The Irish Times*, 27 November, 1954.

³¹⁶ Klein, "Brian Boydell: Of Man and Music," 8.

³¹⁷ Ina Boyle (1889-1967), Irish composer.

³¹⁸ The MacNaughton String Quartet. Consisted of Anne MacNaughton (violin), Elizabeth Rajna (violin), Margaret Major (viola) and Arnold Ashby (cello). Concert flyer at IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³¹⁹ The Quartet performed works by Purcell, Bloch and Vaughan Williams and premiered a work by Elizabeth Maconchy who also attended the event. Letter from John O'Sullivan to A.J. Potter (both members of the Composers' Group), 6 October, 1955, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ The Echo Club provided young composers with an opportunity to perform and discuss their compositions. For further information on the Echo Club see Axel Klein, "Brian Boydell: Of Man and Music," 3.

³²² Boydell, *The Roaring Forties and Thereabouts*, 4.

My assessment of the membership of the Composers' Group and programmes played or performed at its meetings reveal an exclusive group of composers whose principal interests and stylistic vision lay in cosmopolitanism. In choosing this path, it reinforced a group identity which did not conform to the Irish compositional stylistic consensus of the time. The Composers' Group challenged the traditional role of the composer in Ireland and, in so doing, affirmed MAI's status as a sub-culture. Boisnier and Chatman proffered three reasons for joining subcultures:

- psychological reactance induced by situations that are perceived to be behaviourally restrictive
- satisfaction/dissatisfaction with dominant cultural values or pivotal norms and
- changes in commitment to an organization.³²³

In such circumstances, individuals are more inclined to react negatively to the dominant culture and thus fuelling their desire to join a subculture.³²⁴ Through membership of a (sub)cultural organisation, the individual is surrounded by like-minded individuals and seeks "the camaraderie of others who share their views."³²⁵ The MAI (and its Composers' Group) "was started to be difficult"³²⁶ and, despite members' occasional dalliances in arrangements of Irish airs, the group was steadfast in its commitment to modernism. As such, the musical intelligentsia of the MAI was the antithesis of Solomon Asch's conformity experiments which discovered that "the tendency to conformity in our society is so strong that reasonably intelligent and well-meaning young people are willing to call white black."³²⁷

What distinguishes prominent members of the Composers' Group from other Irish composers "is not only their courageous artistic stand, but that they were the first Irish composers of the modern era to study abroad and have the opportunity to be exposed to the most advanced current cosmopolitan approaches".³²⁸ Membership of the Composers' Group allowed those, who sought freedom from the constraints of musical nationalism, to find solace among

³²³ Alicia Boisnier and Jennifer A. Chatman, "The Role of Subcultures in Agile Organizations," Working Paper of Haas School of Business, University of California (Berkeley: University of California, 2002), 17.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

³²⁶ Quoted in Richard Pine, *The Life and World of Charles Acton* (Dublin: Lilliput, 2010), 283.

³²⁷ Solomon Asch, "Opinions and Social Pressure," *Scientific American* 193, no. 5 (November 1955): 34.

³²⁸ Ryan, "Nationalism and Irish Music," 111.

similar-minded individuals. The Group (in its early years) also allowed for an examination of each other's work in a controlled environment. Frederick May warned against the "destructive and useless types of criticism" launched against composers who did not compose in a national style and recommended that

... we must receive all-comers in a spirit of receptive enquiry, and only examine their credentials to the extent of asking if they have acquired the requisite technique to realise fully the expression of their ideas.³²⁹

It should be noted, however, that the Composers' Group was not always receptive to "all-comers" and one might argue that the commitment of its members may have been rooted in a particular form of cultural transmission.

4.9 Promoting the composer

The dynamism of the MAI Composers' Group was reflected in its many activities undertaken during the latter half of 1955. These included attendances at the United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) meeting in Paris, the Annual General Meeting of the Composers' Guild of Great Britain, correspondence with and affiliation to the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) and interviews with BBC Heads of Music in Belfast and London, all of which aimed to raise the profile of Irish composers abroad.³³⁰ The Composers' Group also organised lectures for its members, including an illustrated lecture given by the pioneering American *avant garde* composer, Henry Cowell³³¹ entitled, *Contemporary Music in the USA* which took place on 5 September, 1956, at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin.³³²

No other composers of our time has produced a body of works so radical and so normal, so penetrating and so comprehensive. Add to this massive production his long and influential career as a pedagogue, and Henry Cowell's achievement becomes impressive indeed.³³³

³²⁹ May, "Composer in Ireland," 169.

³³⁰ Summary of Composers' Group cited in a letter from A. J. Potter to John O'Sullivan, 5 January 1956, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³³¹ Henry Cowell (1897-1965), American composer and pianist. Prominent member of the International Composers' Guild (1921-1927) and founder of the New Music Society (1925-1936).

³³² Information obtained from lecture flyer in IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³³³ Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *Virgil Thomson: A Reader – Selected Writings 1924-1984* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 167.

The lecture explored Cowell's experimental techniques including tone cluster technique, the Aeolian Harp (string piano), explorations of music from Asia and the Middle East, polytonality and polyrhythms which must have shocked many attendees and delighted MAI members who wished to educate Irish audiences about modern music.³³⁴ Cowell's participation in various composers' organisations provided guidance for MAI's own Composers' Group and, inspired by Cowell's remarkable lecture, it vowed to secure funding to represent Ireland's musical voice abroad.³³⁵ In pursuit of this end, in 1957, the MAI unsuccessfully applied for government funding to send a delegate to represent Ireland at the international music council of UNESCO; subsequently, it organised a concert on 21 October, 1957, at the Royal College of Physicians, raising the necessary £35 for this purpose.³³⁶ Charles Acton described the concert as "a most enjoyable anthology of music by composers associated with Dublin since 1597".³³⁷ Acton praised the programme, which featured the music of Irish composers or composers who spent a considerable length of time in Ireland since 1597 (the year Dowland's *First Book of Ayres* was published).³³⁸

Despite such commendable efforts, Denis Donoghue painted a depressing picture of the future of music in Ireland in 1955. He wrote that "it is quite possible that Irish music may have *no* future existence" and asserts that he sees "no grounds for optimism: quite the contrary."³³⁹ Donoghue opined that Fleischmann's claim of there being twenty-nine Irish composers who received first performances of their works between 1935 and 1951 in *Music in Ireland: A Symposium* (1952) "indicates that during those years anybody who had any opus whatever lying around had it performed in public regardless of merit".³⁴⁰ Ireland's lack of representation at international level was due, he claimed, to composers' use of folk-music material which, he believed, was either led by a foolish sense of nationalism, employed in order to mask a lack of talent or, simply as a way to earn a living in Ireland. He recommended that Irish composers

³³⁴ Summary of Henry Cowell's Lecture, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ "Music Association to Give Concert," *The Irish Times*, 21 October, 1957. Ireland joined UNESCO in 1961.

³³⁷ "Anthology with Dublin Links," *The Irish Times*, 22 October, 1957.

³³⁸ Madrigals by John Dowland, Thomas Bateson and Henry George Farmer, and songs by Garret Wesley Mornington, Timothy Geary, John Beckett, Rhoda Coghill, and Richard Cogan were performed by Richard Cooper (tenor) and Tomás Ó Suilleabháin (baritone), both accompanied by Rhona Marshall (piano) and John O'Sullivan conducted the choir. Information obtained from concert programme, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³³⁹ Denis Donoghue, "The Future of Irish Music," in *Studies* 44 (Spring 1955): 109.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 109.

“should begin to look on our folk-music not as grit for a financially profitable mill but as a precious heirloom which one would not dream of using”³⁴¹ and he urged RÉ to commission quartets, songs and operas rather than Irish airs and suites.³⁴²

Axel Klein, however, contradicted Donoghue’s view of the “artistic poverty in Irish music” and asserted that the paucity of creativity was, in fact, caused by a lack of awareness of compositions.³⁴³ Klein contended that Irish composers “often withdrew so far into their studios that the public became completely unaware of their existence.”³⁴⁴ Compositions by Geoffrey Molyneux Palmer, Ina Boyle, Mary Dickenson-Auner and Frederick May were either unknown or rarely performed in Ireland at this time and it further supports Klein’s thesis.³⁴⁵ The MAI and the Composers’ Group placed the plight and promotion of the composer in Ireland at the centre of their early activities and attempted to erase misconceptions, as articulated by Donoghue. These misconceptions “say more about *our* failure to recognise, appreciate and promote what music there actually is.”³⁴⁶

In other respects, ideas expressed by Donoghue resonate with MAI ideology and merit attention here. His suggestion that RÉ employ a resident composer of international standing, such as Vaughan Williams or Hindemith, to teach young composers in Ireland is reminiscent of early MAI representations to the Department of P&T (see Chapter 3). He argued that, if RÉ can employ foreign conductors and instrumentalists, why not a resident composer?³⁴⁷ Both Donoghue and the MAI acknowledged the need to create a musically educated audience at all levels in order to appreciate music other than arrangements of Irish airs. “It takes two to effect communication: the composer must provide the music, and the audience must offer its share in understanding and appreciation.”³⁴⁸ The difference between Donoghue and the MAI was that Donoghue wrote about the deficiencies in music in Ireland, whereas the MAI was actively involved in pursuing avenues to promote and enhance the contemporary music experience.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 112.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Axel Klein, “Root and Directions in Twentieth-century Irish Art Music,” in *Irish Music in the Twentieth Century: Irish Musical Studies 7*, eds. Gareth Cox and Axel Klein (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 170.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 170.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 171.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 171.

³⁴⁷ Donoghue, “The Future of Irish Music,” 113.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

4.10 Publication and performance opportunities for Irish composers

The MAI wished to create awareness of contemporary Irish compositions, at home and abroad, and highlighted the limited publishing opportunities for 'serious' composers. Frederick May had previously voiced his concerns at

... the lack of a good music-publishing firm in Ireland. Through the enterprise of An Gúm (Government Publications) and of the sponsors of Foilseacháin Feis Átha Cliath a certain amount of Irish music, chiefly arrangements of folk song, has been made available, but little original music of a serious kind ... a music publisher ... caters only for a strictly limited market, and consequently an Irish composer, trying to force his music on the attention of an English firm, is labouring under an almost impossible disadvantage. What is required is a first-class publishing firm in Dublin, with an intelligent and imaginative board of directors, which would extend a welcome to work of proved merit, irrespective of popular appeal.³⁴⁹

From its inception, the MAI made representations to An Gúm/Government Publications with regard to expanding its catalogue of Irish composers and broadening its musical style.³⁵⁰ The Composers' Group continued this contact by urging An Gúm to update its music catalogue which had limited instrumental music, no explanatory notes, was not cross indexed and only suitable for those interested in choral music (much of which was set in unsuitable keys).³⁵¹ Further, it criticised An Gúm for "making no effort to push sales" and suggested hiring a sales agent to rectify matters.³⁵² It is surprising that the Composers' Group made no attempt to provide its own publishing opportunities at this time. It had considerable editorial expertise within its own ranks and, with administrative assistance from the MAI and the additional support of a joint enterprise with the CRC, it could have had a practical input into solving its own difficulty in this regard.

In 1956, the Composers' Group campaigned for increased exposure of contemporary compositions at artistic venues and at music festivals such as the Feis Ceoil and An t-Oireachtas (both of which included competitions for original compositions and arrangements in their programmes). At a meeting of the Composers' Group on 17 February, 1956, it was suggested that the winning composition in the composers' prize should be premiered at the Feis Ceoil

³⁴⁹ Frederick May, "The Composer in Ireland," 166.

³⁵⁰ Various correspondence between the MAI and An Gúm, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³⁵¹ MAI, *Minutes of Composers' Group*, 17 February, 1956, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 47.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

prizewinners' concert.³⁵³ It was also recommended that the Feis Ceoil and An t-Oireachtas should submit prize winning compositions for publication to An Gúm.³⁵⁴ The response of the Feis Ceoil was less than encouraging. In a letter dated 26 September, 1956, its executive committee was not enthusiastic about the MAI's recommendations; in particular, it rejected the suggestion to award a prize for the performance of unpublished Irish works due to the difficulty in carrying it out. However, it did agree that:

- no composition be awarded a prize unless it is deemed worthy and capable of performance by the adjudicator
- where practicable, winning compositions from the previous year should be performed at the festival concert
- prizewinning compositions considered suitable by the music sub-committee should be used as test pieces on the condition that the composer bear publication costs
- prizewinning works be submitted to An Gúm without further responsibility by the Feis Ceoil.³⁵⁵

4.11 Recording opportunities for contemporary Irish music

Increased concert and performance opportunities were not the only areas explored by the Composers' Group. The Decca Record Label (New York) invited the group to suggest works for a compilation album of six contemporary Irish compositions, *New Music from Old Erin*.³⁵⁶ In March 1956, the Composers' Group sent a circular to members asking them to compile a list of six of their favourite works by contemporary Irish composers for orchestra, small ensembles, songs or song cycles and other solo works. Two volumes of *New Music from Old Erin* were recorded by the R  SO under the baton of Milan Horvat and produced by American, Simon Rady. By all accounts, the experience of the recording did not run smoothly, though it did provide members of the R  SO with an opportunity to earn "extra money outside their routine contract".³⁵⁷ In his memoirs, Boydell recalled an incident during the recording when Rady accused the clarinettist of providing the orchestra a flat A during tuning. The clarinettist, Michele

³⁵³ Minutes of the Composers' Group meeting 17 February, 1956, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Letter from Betty Beatty (Feis Ceoil honorary secretary) to John O'Sullivan (MAI) on 26 September, 1956, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³⁵⁶ Letter from Simon Rady (Decca Company) to John O'Sullivan, April 1956, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³⁵⁷ Boydell, *The Roaring Forties*, 78.

Incenzo, replied, “I have-a a certificate from my professore in Napoli: my clarinetto plays a perfect 440 A!”³⁵⁸ Rady, described by Boydell as a brash individual, responded by sending the wind section home but they returned for the afternoon session “with their tails between their legs.”³⁵⁹ The final selection was notable for the prominence of Irish airs and dance tunes re-worked into a classical idiom (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. New Music from Old Erin, Volume 1 and 2 as selected by members of the Composers’ Group

Composer	Work
Brian Boydell	<i>Megalithic Ritual Dances</i> Op.39 (1956)
Seóirse Bodley	<i>Music for Strings</i> (1952)
Frederick May	<i>An Sparainín, The King’s Cave and I’ll Travel to Mount Nebo</i> from <i>Suite of Irish Airs</i> (1953)
<i>Volume 2</i>	
A.J. Potter	<i>Variations on a Popular Tune</i> (1955)
T.C. Kelly	<i>Three Pieces for Strings</i> (1949)
John F. Larchet	<i>Dirge for Ossian and MacAnaty’s Reel</i> (1940)
Arthur Duff	<i>Irish Suite</i>

In 1957, *Billboard* magazine described the record as “Hibernian folk tunes given symphonic treatment” and suggested that “it would have limited appeal and required a specialised audience.”³⁶⁰ Though the works were suggested by members of the Composers’ Group, this was not the type of music the group wished to promote and the disc, though well recorded (by Deutsche Grammophon), was never released in Ireland. It is important to note that

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ *The Billboard: The Amusement Industry’s Leading Newsweekly*, 16 February, 1957, 38.
<http://www.billboard.com> (accessed 12 February, 2010).

the title of the record and the depiction of a traditional thatched cottage from rural Ireland on the record cover ‘blatantly’ targeted the Irish-American market. Music critic, Ian Fox, described the sleeve as “the most awful sleeve ever given to a disc of modern music” but noted that “the record itself is well worthwhile.”³⁶¹ (see figs. 11 and 12)



Figure 11. Sleeve of *New Music from Old Erin*, Volume 1

³⁶¹ Ian Fox, “Irish Recordings,” in *Counterpoint* (April 1972), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 11.



Figure 12. Sleeve of *New Music from Old Erin*, Volume 2

Apart from the criticism of the stereotypical representation of a rural Irish setting on the sleeve cover, the recording brought awareness of Irish contemporary music outside Ireland and was the first recording of orchestral music written by contemporary Irish composers.³⁶² Considering that the majority of the composers featured on both volumes were members of the MAI (at various times), it is surprising that another recording was not made.³⁶³

4.12 *Catalogue of Contemporary Irish Composers* (1968, and revised 1973)

From the experience of compiling works for the 1956 recording, a member of the Composers' Group suggested an audit of contemporary composers and their works be made available, particularly for dissemination abroad and possibly to negate Denis Donoghue's

³⁶² Since 1956, several volumes of recordings of contemporary Irish music (independent of the MAI) have been issued. The most recent one is promoted by the CMC; *Contemporary Music from Ireland, Volume 10* (2011) which features the works of ten established and emerging composers from Ireland including, Enda Bates, Ann Cleare, Neil O'Connor, Amanda Feery, Adam Melvin, Donal Sarsfield, Garrett Sholdice, Ed Bennett, Brian Irvine and Ailís Ní Riain.

³⁶³ The next recording of contemporary music by an Irish composer was Ó Riada's *Vertical Man* in 1969.

criticism of the standard of composition in Ireland.³⁶⁴ This suggestion was eventually realised over a decade later. In 1963, the Composers' Group, on Ina Boyle's suggestion, approached the CRC with the idea of publishing a catalogue of works by Irish composers. In creating a catalogue, the Composers' Group wished to present a full and up-to-date account of contemporary compositions in Ireland, publication details for those interested in accessing the works and, lastly, provide a reference point for potential users at home and abroad.

By 1964, Bodley and Deale began compiling the catalogue but it was not completed until 1967 as a number of composers were slow to supply a list of their compositions. *Catalogue of Contemporary Irish Composers* was published in 1968 with financial assistance from the Department of External Affairs (through the CRC). It records the works of twenty-three composers, provides information on instrumentation, duration, details of publication and, where appropriate, discography. The catalogue was distributed to Irish diplomatic embassies and consuls abroad and was available in university and public libraries in Ireland.³⁶⁵ In 1973, the catalogue was revised by Deale. This edition was again funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs through the CRC. It provided brief biographical information on each composer, a list of compositions, duration of each movement, instrumentation and details of first performance (see Appendix C).³⁶⁶ A third edition of the catalogue with a slightly different title, *Catalogue of Contemporary Irish Music*, was revised by Bernard Harrison of the Irish Composers' Centre³⁶⁷ in 1982 but, by this time, the MAI had no connection with the catalogue.

Though information on (living) composers in the catalogues was provided, for the most part by the composers themselves, details were not always accurate. Séamas de Barra's book on Aloys Fleischmann and Mark Cronin's MA thesis on A.J. Potter³⁶⁸ both noted inaccuracies in the

³⁶⁴ MAI, draft letter, *An Audit of Contemporary Irish Composers* (1957), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

³⁶⁵ MAI, 1968 MAI Council Report, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40, 2.

³⁶⁶ Works by composers Walter Beckett, Seóirse Bodley, Brian Boydell, Ina Boyle, David Byers, Edgar M. Deale, Arthur Duff, Howard Ferguson, Aloys Fleischmann, James Redmond Friel, Bernard Geary, T.C. Kelly, John Kinsella, John F. Larchet, Elizabeth Maconchy, Daniel McNulty, Frederick May, Havelock Nelson, Proinnsias Ó Duinn, Éamonn O'Gallagher (Ó Gallchobhair), Seán Ó Riada, Dorothy Parke, A.J. Potter, John W. Purser, Jim Samson, Eric Sweeney, Joan Trimble, Gerard Victory and James Wilson were included in the second edition.

³⁶⁷ The Irish Composers' Centre was established in 1981. It was based at Liberty Hall, Dublin and funded by the AC until 1985.

³⁶⁸ For further information see Mark Cronin, "A.J. Potter (1918-1980): An Annotated Catalogue of Works" (Master's thesis, Cork Institute of Technology, 2005).

catalogues.³⁶⁹ Cronin catalogued eight hundred works by Potter, four times that in the catalogue edited by Harrison. Nonetheless, the cataloguing of the works by Irish composers, an endeavour initiated by the MAI in 1967, was a valuable survey of Irish composers and their compositions. It represents another MAI/Composers' Group initiative which exists to this day, though under different management (Contemporary Music Centre).³⁷⁰

4.13 Composers' Group: the new generation

The resignation of Brian Boydell, as chairman of the Composers' Group in 1966, and his replacement by Ireland's first *avant-garde* composer, Seóirse Bodley,³⁷¹ signalled a new focus for the Composers' Group in the late sixties and early seventies. Bodley's music from this period has been described as "the most adventurous Irish music of the decade" and his chairmanship of the Composers' Group was pivotal in leading it into an era free from cultural bondages.³⁷² His music marked a major departure for Irish composition as he "no longer sought to fuse the traditional with the sophisticated, but openly confronted the different musical materials, traditional melodies clashing with modern discords, triads with clusters."³⁷³ Unlike Ó Riada, whose engagement with Irish traditional music "became the canvas on which he painted", Bodley's employment of that idiom "was to remain but one colour in a varied palette that he applied in his own compositions".³⁷⁴ In so doing, Bodley achieved what the founders of the Composers' Group sought to accomplish; his "summers spent at the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik (International Summer Course for New Music) in Darmstadt in the 1960s, introduced him to the exciting (if often cerebral) developments in international contemporary

³⁶⁹ Judging by the limited records kept by the Composers' Group during its early years of existence, it is not surprising that the information in the catalogues was incomplete.

³⁷⁰ The most recent edition of the directory, the sixteenth edition, *Irish Composers*, by the Contemporary Music Centre was published in 2009. The directories now include a photograph of the composer, a personal comment from each composer and are available to purchase for €25. Information obtained from Contemporary Music Centre publicity information (2010).

³⁷¹ Seóirse Bodley (1933 -), Irish composer and Professor of Music, University College Dublin (1960-1998). Bodley became chairman of the Festival committee in 1974 and this explains its exclusive promotion of Irish and international *avant-garde* compositions.

³⁷² Anthony Hughes, "Bodley," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians Volume 2*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), 838.

³⁷³ Axel Klein, "Roots and Directions in Twentieth-century Irish Art Music," 178.

³⁷⁴ Robin Elliott, "Gareth Cox, Seóirse Bodley (2010)" in *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland* 6 (June 2011): 88. <http://www.music.ucc.ie/jsmi/index.php/jsmi/article/.../82/91> (accessed 9 August, 2010).

composition.”³⁷⁵ In many ways, Bodley was a true successor of Boydell and his unique voice in Irish music delivered a long-awaited disengagement from the “trap of folk-music”.³⁷⁶ Bodley’s influence had an enormous impact on the new generation of composers and the Composers’ Group. The new emphasis during Bodley’s chairmanship was on the performance of contemporary compositions at the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music.

4.14 Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music

The need to promote contemporary music, at home and abroad, had always been one of the MAI/Composers’ Group’s priorities but, due to limited funding and minority appeal, its activities were curtailed. One of the MAI’s most successful endeavours was the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music (1969–1984). The aim of the Festival, which attracted considerable funding,³⁷⁷ was “to present a broad spectrum of solo, chamber and orchestral music of the twentieth century” with particular attention given to works by Irish composers.³⁷⁸ Leading figures in the Dublin music scene threw their weight behind the venture; Brian Boydell arranged for the use of the Examination Hall at TCD for performances over a sixteen year period, Gerard Victory³⁷⁹ made the RÉSO available for festival performances, and Bodley’s studies and experiences at the International Music Institute Darmstadt inevitably influenced the choice of programme.³⁸⁰ The idea of the Festival arose out of a suggestion by Gerard Schürmann³⁸¹ to Victory who approached the MAI to undertake its administration.³⁸² The first festival took place from 5 to 10 January, 1969; according to MAI festival reports, reviews and my conversations with Dr. Barra Boydell, Ms Gillian Smith, Dr. John Buckley and others, the venture was a

³⁷⁵ Gareth Cox, “An Irishman in Darmstadt: Seóirse Bodley’s *String Quartet no.1* (1968),” in *Irish Music in the Twentieth Century: Irish Musical Studies 7*, eds. Gareth Cox and Axel Klein (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 94.

³⁷⁶ Donoghue, “The Future of Irish Music,” 111.

³⁷⁷ During its lifetime, the Festival was sponsored by the AC, British Council, Dublin Corporation, Goethe Institute, Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland, P.J. Carroll, Guinness Group Sales, Waterford Glass, Bord Fáilte Éireann, McCullough Pigott, Performing Rights Society and other groups. Information obtained from various festival programmes, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 42.

³⁷⁸ Dublin Festival of 20th Century Music Programme (1969), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 42.

³⁷⁹ Gerard Victory (1921-1995), Irish composer and Director of Music at RTE (1967-1982).

³⁸⁰ Other contemporary music festivals at this time were the Donaueschingen Festival, Germany, the ILIOS Contemporary Music Festival, Norway, Edinburgh Festival, Queen’s University Festival, Belfast and the Cabrillo Festival, California.

³⁸¹ Gerard Schürmann (1924 -), born in the Dutch East Indies, brought up in the UK. Composer, conductor and pianist.

³⁸² “Art and Studies,” *The Irish Times*, 20 January, 1975. Festival organisers included Enid Chaloner, Dinah Molloy (Arts Council), P.J. Power and Eoin Garrett.

success. Performances were well attended and the committee successfully engaged internationally acclaimed artists and composers such as Witold Lutoslawski (1978), Andrzej Panufnik (1978), Peter Maxwell Davies/Fires of London (1978), Olivier Messiaen (1976), Elliott Carter (1980) and Karlheinz Stockhausen (1982). Critical reviews were undertaken by William Mann of *The Times* and Felix Aprahamian of the *Sunday Times*. The presence of such eminent musicians, composers and critics highlighted the importance of the Festival and its recognition abroad. Most importantly, it emphasised the fact that the MAI was at the cutting edge of this significant event and major developments in contemporary music in Ireland at this time. Figure 13 shows an array of festival programmes.



Figure 13. Twentieth Century Music Festival Programmes.

4.15 Creating an audience for contemporary music

The Festival was important for a number of reasons: it did “much to foster an awareness and appreciation of contemporary music which had been largely missing from concert programmes”,³⁸³ it was “unique among festivals of its kind for its exclusive attention to twentieth-century work, and was responsible for the increased toleration of, and interest in, contemporary music among Irish audiences.”³⁸⁴ Some months after the first festival in 1969, Edgar M. Deale commented that “the composers featured at the festival would have brought terror to the audiences of sixty years ago” and he celebrated the significance of such a festival in Ireland.³⁸⁵ Charles Rosen argued that it was never the intention of *avant-garde* composers (of the early twentieth century) to shock audiences, they were, in fact

... taking the next reasonable and logical step, of doing work that was already to hand and that had to be done. To a certain extent, the stylistic revolutions of those years were merely the exploitation of already existent possibilities within the artistic languages, the drawing of unavoidable conclusions.³⁸⁶

Avant-garde composers viewed the emancipation of dissonance as an outgrowth of what came before, a natural development in the progress of musical language; however, in selecting this path composers often alienated themselves from mainstream audiences. Christopher Small stated that

... when the work of a composer does become appreciated by a sizeable public it is usually an indication that it has become assimilated into the mainstream of middle-class culture, in other words, that it has ceased to disturb. The composer’s ideas, however directly antagonistic they may once have been to the values and beliefs of its audience, however passionately and eloquently they may have been expressed, become sterilized.³⁸⁷

Similarly, for young Irish composers involved in the Twentieth Century Music Festival, “Brian Boydell’s musical voice was [regarded as] conservative and it was hard [for them] to believe that he was once the ‘naughty boy’ of Irish music in the distant 1940s.”³⁸⁸ The Festival provided creative support and performances for contemporary composers. An audience for contemporary

³⁸³ Pine, *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland*, 314.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 313-314.

³⁸⁵ Edgar M. Deale, “After the Festival,” *Counterpoint* (April 1969), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34: 5.

³⁸⁶ Charles Rosen, *Arnold Schoenberg* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 16.

³⁸⁷ Small, *Music, Society and Education*, 160.

³⁸⁸ Klein, “Brian Boydell: Of Man and Music,” 22.

music was growing in Ireland and the Composers' Group (alongside other agencies involved in the running of the Festival) deserves acknowledgement for its participation in this evolution.

In the early stages of organising the Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival, it was evident that the event was aimed primarily at an elite group of musicians (amateur and professional) *au fait* with the techniques, styles and aesthetics of contemporary music. Music of the twentieth century appealed to a minority of the population and, consequently, the Festival Committee suggested that music from a broad range of contemporary styles including “the conservative, the *avant-garde*,” “the modern classic,” “the foreign and the Irish elements” might be incorporated into future programmes.³⁸⁹ However, the presence of influential composers on the Festival Committee, such as Seóirse Bodley, Eric Sweeney and Gerard Victory, ensured that compositions heavily influenced by contemporary European schools of composition would feature prominently on subsequent festival programmes. Despite the unprecedented rise in the popularity of folk and popular musics and the achievements of Seán Ó Riada and others fusing classical and traditional Irish musics, the organisers placed greater emphasis on transcending national musical idiom, in favour of works firmly rooted in distinctively international musical idioms.

The composer, John Buckley, described the format of the Festival as “unique” and it remained the same throughout its history.³⁹⁰ It began with an open forum which facilitated a discussion on music of the twentieth century and, on each of the six days, there were lunchtime and evening concerts. The programme included symphony concerts, chamber groups, recitals and festival club and fringe events (see Appendix D) at venues such as the Exam Hall (TCD), St. Patrick's College (Drumcondra), St. Francis Xavier Hall, Project Arts Centre, RDS Concert Hall and St. Andrew's Church (Westland Row). In 1970, the festival attracted internationally renowned artists such as Marni Nixon and Yossi Zivoni and was fortunate to obtain international media coverage in English newspapers and on BBC TV.³⁹¹ In 1971, a comprehensive festival

³⁸⁹ MAI, *1978 Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music Programme*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 4.

³⁹⁰ John Buckley, interview with author, Dublin, 21 April, 2010.

³⁹¹ Ian Fox, “Introduction,” *Counterpoint* (February 1970), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34: 3.

programme included artists such as the Gaudeamus String Quartet, Pierre-Michel le Conte and the Trio Mobile.³⁹²

In 1972, the Committee decided to move the festival to June “to give a sufficient length of time for the organising committee to engage appropriate international artists.”³⁹³ However, despite the 1972 Festival being “a considerable success, with attendances coming well up to expectations”, the decision to move the Festival from January to June did not attract greater international attention as had been anticipated.³⁹⁴ From 24 to 30 June, 1972, the Festival Committee presented an ambitious programme which not only focused on the music of composers such as Aloys Fleischmann, John Kinsella,³⁹⁵ Jim Wilson³⁹⁶ and Seóirse Bodley, all of whom specialised in art music, but included a special concert featuring the early compositions of Seán Ó Riada, such as *Hercules dux Ferrariae*, and not his later works which incorporated elements of traditional Irish folk music (see Appendix E).

4.16 Spotlight on youth

The provision of concerts for young composers at international contemporary music festivals had been an important feature and the nurturing of young Irish composers was not neglected in the MAI’s programming of the Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival. It allowed young composers to experience each other’s work, interact with performers of their work and have their work performed before an audience, including critics. The implications of such a valuable experience were summarised by Ian Fox in 1971

The Young Irish Composers of today are very fortunate in having a Festival such as this which provides them with the opportunity of having their works performed and assessed not only by the general public but by music critics from home and abroad.³⁹⁷

³⁹² The Danish group, Trio Mobile was also known as the Ellegaard Trio. MAI, *1971 Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music Programme*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 4.

³⁹³ Ian Fox, “1972 Twentieth Century Festival,” *Counterpoint* (January 1972), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34: 11-12.

³⁹⁴ After the 1972 Festival, it was decided to reduce the Festival to six days and to hold a bi-annual festival (the next festival took place in 1974). MAI, “Report of the Organising Committee of the Twentieth Century Music Festival,” in *1972 MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 38, 6. In order to sustain the momentum and interest in contemporary music after the 1974 Festival, a mini festival of modern music was held in January 1975. The 1975 mini festival consisted of three concerts at TCD, the National Gallery and St. Francis Xavier Hall with performances by the RTÉSO, RTÉ Singers, Audrey Chisholm (piano), Jack Gregory (guitar) and Martin Walshe (double bass).

³⁹⁵ John Kinsella (1932 -), Irish composer and Head of Music, RTÉ (1982-1988).

³⁹⁶ James Wilson (1922-2005), English-born composer based in Ireland.

³⁹⁷ Ian Fox, “Young Composers at the 20th Century Music Festival,” *Counterpoint* (January 1971), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34: 11.

From its inception, the Festival Committee included a Young Composers' Concert on its programme and auditions were held for these concerts.³⁹⁸ One such concert took place on 25 June, 1972, at the Examination Hall (TCD), featuring the works of seven young composers (see Table 4.4) who submitted their compositions to an adjudication panel consisting of Aloys Fleischmann, Seóirse Bodley and Colman Pearce.³⁹⁹

Table 4.4. Young Composers' Concert at the Twentieth Century Music Festival (1972)

Composer	Composition	Performer
Derek Ball	<i>Songs for cello and soprano</i>	Eileen Donlon (soprano) Aisling Drury-Byrne (cello)
Brian Beckett	<i>Piano Sonata</i>	Brian Beckett (piano)
Sally Ann Bryan	<i>Suite for Piano</i>	Declan Fitzpatrick (piano)
Frank Corcoran	<i>Kleine Cellomusick</i>	Aisling Drury-Byrne (cello)
Raymond Deane	<i>Idols for Organ</i>	Gerard Gillen (organ)
John Gibson	<i>Piano Quartet</i>	Joan Mooney (violin) John Vallery (viola) Gerald Kelly (cello) John Gibson (piano)
Anne Willis	<i>Three Joyce Songs</i>	Elizabeth Wallace (soprano) Anne Willis (piano)

Source: Information derived from *Counterpoint* (June 1972), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34: 13.

For composers, such as Raymond Deane and Frank Corcoran, third level students at this time, the Festival was an important forum for the expression of their musical aesthetics. Both of these composers benefitted from the MAI's Varming Prize for young composers, first held in 1973 and separate from the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music.⁴⁰⁰ A survey of the winning

³⁹⁸ Pat O'Kelly, "Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music," *Counterpoint* (February 1973), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34: 7.

³⁹⁹ Ian Fox, "Young Composers at the Festival," *Counterpoint* (June 1972), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34: 13.

⁴⁰⁰ The prize was donated by Seán Mulcahy of Varming Mulcahy Reilly Associates who was made an honorary member of the MAI. The competition was open to young composers born in Ireland or of Irish nationality, under the age of thirty years. Entrants were required to compose a work for chamber ensemble (maximum eight

composers suggests that the prize was an important stepping stone to the establishment of a successful national and international profile (see Appendix F). Many of the young composers, who took part in the Festival, would later enjoy international success as full-time composers. Composer, Gerald Barry, whilst acknowledging the value of the Festival's platform for young composers, highlighted the difficulties facing young composers in getting their works performed outside of this event.⁴⁰¹

Admittedly, there is the 20th Century Festival; but even then composers have to compete with one another to obtain a hearing for their music. Even if a composer is awarded a place in the Festival, is he obliged to twiddle his determinate thumbs for the remaining eleven months of the year, until the glorious moment of acknowledgement once more draws near? Is he to gain artistic fulfilment from indulging in mental gymnastics with the silent notes of his forgotten scores?⁴⁰²

Traditionally, the second major difficulty facing composers in Ireland was the issue of identity. Pine argued that "it is definitely clear that a *sense of place* is perhaps stronger among Irish composers than among composers of many other societies in which identity is a less divisive and contested issue."⁴⁰³ By the early 1970s, however, the constraints of a national identity had diminished considerably. Eve O'Kelly cited composers such as Gerald Barry, Eibhlís Farrell and Eric Sweeney as the first generation of Irish composers "to be able to dispense with the weight of their Irishness, as it were, feeling the need neither to demonstrate it nor rebel against it".⁴⁰⁴ Nationalism "has few attractions for the young today, and though they may respect their folk heritage, there are not many opportunities to exploit it in their idioms."⁴⁰⁵ As Kenneth Loveland noted in his critique of the 1972 Festival, "much of the music heard from young composers in Dublin this year could have been written by their contemporaries in Warsaw

performers), 10 to 20 minutes duration and winning compositions were performed at the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music. In its first year, 1973, only four entries were received and were adjudicated by the composer, Elizabeth Maconchy. The lack of enthusiasm disappointed the MAI who hoped that "the apparent apathy of our young composers" did not "infer a lack of interest in the sponsors' generosity." Pat O'Kelly, "The Varming Prize," *Counterpoint* (November 1973), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 20.

⁴⁰¹ Gerald Barry, "The Association of Young Irish Composers," *Counterpoint* (December 1972), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 12.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ Pine, *Music and Broadcasting in Ireland*, 30.

⁴⁰⁴ Eve O'Kelly, "Finding Our Voice: Music in Ireland Today," *Brio* 32, 2. (Autumn/Winter 1995): 96.

⁴⁰⁵ Kenneth Loveland, "Composers in Search of a National Identity," *Counterpoint* (October 1972), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 8.

or Hamburg.”⁴⁰⁶ This marked a milestone in the history of Irish composition, of which the founders of the MAI would have been very proud. Loveland lamented the difficulty faced by many Irish composers in absorbing idioms from their national music into their *oeuvres* as Bartók, Kodály, Vaughan Williams and other European composers had done. His caustic criticism of the majority of compositions premiered at the young composers’ concert, however, reflects the disparate views which existed in attitudes towards the standing of composition in Ireland. He wrote

Brian Beckett’s *Piano Sonata* sounded as though the Rachmaninov centenary was being celebrated a year early; John Gibson’s *Piano Quartet* was contrapuntal muscle-flexing; both pieces were unduly conditioned in thought by the fact that the composers are excellent pianists. Raymond Deane’s *Idols* for organ was musical doodling; Frank Corcoran has genuine gifts which need disciplining; Sally Ann Bryan may have them, too, but her *Suite for Pianoforte* was pretentious.⁴⁰⁷

However, participation in “the most significant event on the contemporary music scene” provided young Irish composers with a means of having their works performed and assessed.⁴⁰⁸ Additionally, the Festival momentarily quelled what Paul Fromm noted as one of the most serious problems in musical culture, namely “the frustrating isolation of young composers and performers from each other, which is intensified by the often unsympathetic attitude of performers towards the music of our own time.”⁴⁰⁹

In its sixteen year lifespan, the Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival achieved many of the objectives of the Composers’ Group. By 1970, for example, the Composers’ Group met just once “by invitation of Dr. and Mrs Seóirse Bodley. This was to hear the working tapes of Brian Boydell’s music for the film *Errigal*, and the composer’s explanation and comments.”⁴¹⁰ However, occasions like this were few and haphazard and, for the most part, the MAI’s Composers’ Group operated an *ad hoc* approach to its brief. It comes as no surprise that, in 1976, its members perceived little opportunity in continuing as before. It is unclear who first mooted a

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁰⁸ Arts Council, *1976 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1977).

⁴⁰⁹ Paul Fromm, “The Princeton Seminar – Its Purpose and Promise,” *Musical Quarterly* 46, no. 2, 155.

⁴¹⁰ MAI, *MAI 1970 Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40, 2.

merging of its membership with that of the Association of Young Irish Composers (AYIC)⁴¹¹ and there is no evidence that, it was openly debated and decided upon at any meeting. However, that it occurred is not in question. The AC, the most likely protagonist behind the merger and the establishment of the new Association of Irish Composers (AIC)⁴¹² had been on a crusade of professionalising all arts activities for some time and, its annual report of the following year professed a “special interest in the development of contemporary Irish music.”⁴¹³ The fact that the AC contributed annual operating costs to the newly formed AIC (£700 in 1977) certainly indicates a degree of official approval for the new organisation. The AIC had conferred greater benefits on its membership than either of the two previous organisations representing Irish composers. Under its first president, Seóirse Bodley, it became the Irish arm of the ISCM and was entitled to be represented at its activities. Though its aims were not altogether different from those of its predecessors, the AIC was seen as being more inclusive (involving young and established composers in its activities), it was freed from the encumbrance of the MAI and more focused on the particular needs and interests of Irish contemporary composers. However, arguably, with the establishment of the AIC, it was the young composers who stood to gain most because, for the first time in history, the institutionalised hierarchy among Irish composers was abandoned in favour of a wider collective of individuals focused on promoting their own music. Ironically, had the Composers’ Group remained under the ambit of the MAI, it too may have ultimately suffered a similar fate to its sponsoring body.

4.17 A turning point for the Festival and the MAI

The year, 1985, was significant for music in Ireland for two reasons: European Music Year (EMY)⁴¹⁴ was celebrated and the Contemporary Music Centre (CMC) was founded to

⁴¹¹ The AYIC was founded in 1972 to represent young Irish composers. John Gibson (president), Brian Beckett (secretary), Raymond Deane (treasurer), Derek Ball and Gerald Barry led the Association. It received AC funding.

⁴¹² The AIC is the Irish representative of the ISCM and its aims are to further the musical composition of Irish composers, to enhance the professional status of Irish composers and to generate interest in twentieth-century music in Ireland. Pat O’Kelly, “The Association of Irish Composers,” *Counterpoint* (June-August 1977), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 5.

⁴¹³ Arts Council, *1977 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1978).

⁴¹⁴ The MAI celebrated EMY by organising a mini-festival of three concerts on 26 and 27 January, 1985 at St Stephen’s Church, Mount Street and the Hugh Lane Gallery, Parnell Square, Dublin. The European Music Year committee acknowledged the MAI as having “long been to the fore in promoting 20th century music” and considered the “promotion of works by living Irish composers” as one of its priorities. *EMY News*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 24.

promote new Irish music at home and abroad and to act as a resource centre.⁴¹⁵ For the MAI, however, 1985 represented a nadir from which it never recovered; it administered its final Twentieth Century Music Festival, albeit a mini Festival for EMY and this year marked the beginning of a diminution of its influence. In 1985, the AC sanctioned a grant of £20,000 for the 1986 Twentieth Century Music Festival and elaborate plans were drawn up for the visit of composer, György Ligeti, a young composers' concert and five concerts by the London Sinfonietta for whom compositions by Raymond Deane and Dominic Muldowney had been commissioned and funded by the AC of Ireland and the UK respectively. The AC grant of £20,000 represented a 100% increase on 1984. Enid Chaloner (MAI Council member and chair person of the Twentieth Century Festival Committee) was "greatly impressed at the faith being shown by the Arts Council but expressed her grave concern at the amount of finance still to be found" and subsequently, a sponsorship committee was established.⁴¹⁶ By mid-1985, however, additional sponsorship had not been raised and the MAI "was unable to fund its elaborate plans" due to a shortfall in funding of £12,800.⁴¹⁷ Consequently, the MAI reluctantly proposed a considerably curtailed programme to the AC which involved:

- the cancellation of Ligeti's visit to the Festival
- a reduced London Sinfonietta and
- the cancellation of the performances of the two commissioned works.⁴¹⁸

At a meeting on 1 July, 1985, with Enid Chaloner, the AC voiced its "serious concern at the possible loss of the two commissioned works and the drastic reduction of the festival", but graciously suggested that, if another body was identified to take over the running of the Festival, its grant "could be put in cold storage."⁴¹⁹ Ultimately, however, the AC could not approve the

⁴¹⁵ The AC awarded the CMC £15,600 in 1985. Arts Council, *1985 Arts Council Annual Report*.

⁴¹⁶ MAI, Minutes of MAI Meeting on 29 June, 1984. IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 43.

⁴¹⁷ "Musical Highs and Lows of 1986," *The Irish Times*, 1 January, 1987. From the first Festival, the MAI established a guarantee fund which could be called in at times of financial difficulty, but this was not adequate to meet the shortfall.

⁴¹⁸ Memo of a meeting with the AC and MAI Twentieth Century Festival Committee, on 1 July 1985, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 24.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2

drastic cuts to the programme suggested by the MAI and, having withdrawn its funding, the Festival was cancelled.⁴²⁰

Music critic, Michael Dervan claimed that the “MAI’s difficulties with the festival were an indication of a deeper malaise within the organisation” and, as former editor of *Soundpost*, he was only too well aware of the financial difficulties facing the Association at this time. In 1984, Dervan had astutely observed that the MAI’s input into the administration of the Festival was jeopardising the reputation of the Festival. He noted that the MAI

... appears to be approaching a crossroads in its development, and a badly-needed re-organisation of its structure is currently under consideration. The MAI suffers from the same lack of direction as the festival it promotes.⁴²¹

His caustic attack, which persisted over two articles,⁴²² was probably justified in view of the financial difficulties then experienced by the Association in its organisation of the Festival and its magazine, *Soundpost*. The hegemony of the MAI in the musical life of Dublin was gradually being eroded and the AC looked to other organisations to carry out its policies on a professional basis. The long term effects of the failure of these initiatives (the proposed Twentieth Century Music Festival of 1986 and *Soundpost*), together with other contributing factors to the demise of the MAI, are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

4.18 Conclusions

An assessment of the legacy of the MAI’s Composers’ Group, given the period concerned and the prevailing attitude of its participating personalities, involves mediating the complex contrivance for dominance between two artistic mindsets, one that espoused a particular Irish identity and the other that eschewed any folk influence in favour of a more contemporary cosmopolitan European style. Both were perceived by Boydell and others as incompatible, whereas Fleischmann and his followers sought ways of reconciling them within a personal voice which, he claimed, could provide as unique and valid a musical language as that of Bartók, Kodály, Vaughan Williams, Granados or other nationalist composers. Denis Donoghue described those who fell “into the trap of folk-music” as doing so out of loyalty to their country or “to

⁴²⁰ RTE organised its own festival of modern music in 1986.

⁴²¹ “The Right Note?,” *The Sunday Tribune*, 30 December, 1984.

⁴²² “Musical Highs and Lows of 1986,” *The Irish Times*, 1 January, 1987 and “The Right Note?,” *The Sunday Tribune*, 30 December, 1984.

conceal the absence of genuine creative gifts.”⁴²³ He explained how these factors arrested the development of Irish contemporary composers who, unlike their compatriots in the literary movement, were not represented at international level.⁴²⁴ Donoghue’s assessment of Irish composition at this time was, in some respects, a discourse involving the *avant garde* versus the traditional and he seemed unaffected by the fact that, what was at stake was the possibility of alienating one side with a consequent loss of audience support and funding, i.e. the very means of subsistence for a working composer. At this time, “Ireland had neither the wealth to reward or encourage a composer, nor a resident aristocracy to patronize and protect”⁴²⁵ a composer, nor did the early Irish State fund the high arts. Also, Irish cultural tastes differed from other European countries and the musical infrastructure for art music in Ireland was in its infancy in the mid-twentieth century. As May suggested in 1952, a composer “who tried to make a living by composition in Ireland would be inviting death by slow, or perhaps not so slow, starvation.”⁴²⁶

It is a sad but undeniable fact that a ‘serious’ composer working in our society today is addressing a smaller proportion of the population than in any other period in the history of western music; not only is the audience for concert music a minority within the general population, but the contemporary composer is able to engage the attention of a small minority of that minority.⁴²⁷

Although evidence of the earliest activities of the Composers Group (i.e. its lunchtime concerts, the *New Music from Old Erin* recordings, and the publishing ventures) showed a unified and tolerant membership and the co-existence of both approaches, over the course of time, it was Boydell’s view that prevailed. This was most obvious from about 1970, i.e. during the time of the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music and the establishment of the Association of Irish Composers. The particular influence of Seóirse Bodley is noteworthy in this regard. His leadership role in both the Festival and the Association, inspired a new generation of young idealistic composers whose artistic roots were fed by international rather than national ideas. It was at this time that the earlier objectives of the Composers’ Group were achieved. Links were forged with foreign composers’ groups and there was an expansion of both performance opportunities and commissions. It is unfortunate that the activities of the

⁴²³ Donoghue, “The Future of Irish Music,” 111.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Parker, “For the Purpose of Public and Music Education,” 193.

⁴²⁶ May, “The Composer in Ireland,” 168.

⁴²⁷ Small, *Music, Society and Education*, 164.

Composers' Group over almost twenty-five years have been largely forgotten with improvements credited to more recent professional organisations associated with contemporary music in Ireland today. Its contribution and achievements should be acknowledged and recognised, particularly as it was primarily an amateur body. Its most important legacy was its insistence on an artistic trajectory of development that sought to ensure "an Ireland less concerned with its own national identity, less antagonistic to outside influence."⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-79* (1981), 226.

Chapter 5

The Contribution of Olive Smith to the Music Association of Ireland



Figure 14. Olive Smith (1906 – 1993)

5.1 Introduction

From 1948 to 1975 the signature of Olive Smith appears on most MAI correspondence. Indeed, her involvement with the Association has been such that it could be argued that the first half of the history of the MAI parallels, to a large extent, the story of her time with the organisation. Though histories of the development of music in Ireland from the mid-twentieth century tend to favour the achievements of professional musicians, composers and academics, the contribution of voluntary musicians to musical life in Ireland, as elsewhere, has been considerable and merits further study. Smith's story has never been told and, in this chapter, I assess her contribution to the MAI. She was recognised by her fellow committee members as being an integral part of the Association from its inception.

Olive Smith's part in these happenings has been decisive. We all did our share but always with the comforting knowledge that we could be certain that ideas ... would be made to work, that Olive, with her driving force, would supervise, organise and would control, inspire, cajole, wheedle ... and get things done.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁹ Edgar M. Deale, "To Olive Smith – A Tribute for Her Retirement," *Counterpoint* (December 1975), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 5.

The abundance of references to Smith in the MAI Archive paints a vivid picture of her contribution to Irish musical life and the MAI, but the dearth of biographical information prompted me to carry out a number of interviews with close family members and surviving committee members. Olive Smith's daughter, Gillian, a talented pianist and teacher, provided much personal information which complements my archival research. My objective in this chapter is to highlight Smith's tireless devotion to music in Ireland and delineate its permeation of every aspect of her life, personal and professional.

Olive Smith lived through a period in Irish history which experienced radical political, sociological and cultural transformations, and she was to add to these radical changes through her involvement with the MAI. Her exceptional organisational abilities, together with her determined fighting spirit, found their perfect outlet in her long and committed involvement in music and music education in Ireland. In evaluating her contribution to the development of a musical infrastructure in Ireland and her prominent role in the MAI, one must locate Smith's achievements as part of a tradition of potent female activism in Irish associations and cultural movements dating back to the late nineteenth-century when prominent female figures such as Dr. Annie Patterson,⁴³⁰ Lady Augusta Gregory⁴³¹ and Countess Constance Markievicz⁴³² were heavily involved in politics and culture. Unlike well-documented historical accounts of female revolutionary activists, such as Maud Gonne, Countess Markievicz and others, the names of those women involved in music, who also challenged perceived notions of women's role in society, have been largely forgotten.⁴³³ However, recent musicological research into the involvement of women in the musical and cultural life of Dublin, particularly in the nineteenth-century, has uncovered a healthy but relatively undocumented contribution on their part. Highlighting their achievements helps to alleviate what Margaret Ward describes as Ireland's "collective amnesia" with regard to women's place in history.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ Annie Patterson (1868-1934), Irish composer, academic, organist and arranger of folk-music. She was one of the first women in the world to receive a Mus. D. in 1889 from the Royal University of Ireland. For further information on Annie Patterson see *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁴³¹ Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-1932), Irish dramatist and folklorist.

⁴³² Countess Constance Markievicz (1868-1927), Irish revolutionary, suffragette, first woman elected to the House of Commons (1919), Minister for Labour.

⁴³³ Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy, eds., *Women, Power and Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Attic Press, 1995), 14.

⁴³⁴ Kit and Cyril Ó Céirín, *Women of Ireland: A Biographic Dictionary* (Galway: Tír Eolas, 1996), 5.

After some brief biographical information, subsequent sections in this chapter will focus on Smith's significant contribution, in particular her role in the campaign for a national concert hall, her tireless efforts in the promotion of music in regional and rural areas and her championing of various educational projects for the youth of Ireland.

5.2 Biography

Born in Dublin on 19 June, 1906, Mabel Olive Richardson was the youngest of three girls who grew up in Kenilworth Square, Rathgar, Dublin. Her family had strong connections with the Presbyterian Church and her exceptional leadership skills were channelled through the organisation of church activities from an early age. These skills were inherited from her father who set up youth organisations and organised concerts to give young musicians the opportunity to perform in public. She also enjoyed working with young people and had a long association with the Irish girl-guide movement. Educated at Miss Garret's private secondary school, Rathgar Road, Dublin, she showed particular aptitude for science and maths which she pursued at third level. She commenced her musical education with a private piano teacher and, during her teenage years, she became a piano and organ student of John Turner Huggard. Singing in many of Huggard's choirs, Smith was inspired by this wonderful, charismatic figure and, through him, developed her love of choral singing and conducting. Along with her good friend, Edgar M. Deale (who introduced her to the MAI), she was actively involved in the Culwick Choral Society, where she held the position of honorary treasurer for a number of years.⁴³⁵

Olive Smith entered TCD in 1923 with the intention of studying science. However, her attendance was affected by the gradual decline in her mother's health and she transferred to the BA BComm. Her interest in astronomy and geology continued and she shared this knowledge with the enthusiastic girl guides under her care whilst out camping in the Powerscourt Demesne, Wicklow. She also had a keen interest in Irish history, literature and gardening. Following her marriage in 1932 to chemist, Lyall Smith, their only child, Gillian, was born in 1943. From 1964, Smith worked with her husband at their photographic developing business, Lyall Smith Laboratories, Terenure Road East, Dublin. She applied her business acumen to the day-to-day running of the business and, when her husband developed cancer and passed away at the beginning of 1969, she continued to run the business for a

⁴³⁵ Gillian Smith, interview by author, Dublin, 29 March, 2010.

short period.⁴³⁶ Gillian, her daughter, remembers that her mother never regarded herself as a “woman of the house” and was not prepared to accept the collective identity assigned to women of her generation. She did not conform to de Valera’s ideals that women should exist in “domestic ideology” by assuming the role of mothers and housekeepers.⁴³⁷

For a couple of years she stayed at home, rearing her child, working in the garden; she took the opportunity to have some harmony lessons from the organist Willy Watson, but for much of the time ... she was going crazy with boredom. It is clear that the MAI provided an ideal outlet for her considerable imaginative and organising talents.⁴³⁸

Throughout her long association with the MAI, Smith held various posts: initially honorary treasurer (1948-1958), honorary secretary (1959-1971) and, eventually, chairperson (1971-1975). She announced her retirement as chairperson in November 1975, bringing to a close twenty-seven years of loyal service to the Association and, more importantly, a remarkable contribution to its activities. However, this was only semi-retirement as she remained chairman of the SRS Committee and director of the IYO. Pat O’Kelly, MAI chairperson (1975-1983), underlined the wonderful achievements of his predecessor on her retirement, commenting that, for over three decades, the MAI experienced “the valuable labour of Olive Smith” and that many of its activities were “fostered through her ingenuity and efforts.”⁴³⁹ MAI’s thirty-year milestone was celebrated in a series of articles written by Smith in *Counterpoint* magazine (see fig. 15):

⁴³⁶ Gillian Smith, interview by author, Dublin, 29 March, 2010.

⁴³⁷ Caitríona Clear, *Women of the House: Women’s Household Work in Ireland 1926-1961, Discourses, Experiences, Memories* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 5.

⁴³⁸ Patricia Quinn, “Olive Smith: Woman of Action,” *Soundpost* 15 (August/September 1983), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 18.

⁴³⁹ Pat O’Kelly, “TCD Honours Olive Smith,” *Counterpoint* (June-August 1978), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 4.



Figure 15. Articles written by Olive Smith in *Counterpoint* (1978 and 1979).

5.3 Amateur musician and zealous activist

After the formation of the MAI in 1948, Smith was elected honorary treasurer and served on its first Council. She was one of sixteen committee members brimming with fresh ideas and united by the common goal of furthering music in Ireland. Council members devoted their time and energy to the Association but Smith proved to be a driving force in the realisation of their vision. As Edgar M. Deale stated; “we were all afloat with bright ideas but I wonder how many of them would have realised full fruition without Olive’s selfless organisational ability.”⁴⁴⁰ Smith was one of five female members of the first MAI Council of 16 members; the other female members were all professional musicians (see table 3.1, p.31).

⁴⁴⁰ Deale, “To Olive Smith – A Tribute for Her Retirement,” 5.

Smith was an active amateur musician and attended several of the summer schools of music organised by the DoE between 1946 and 1956. The summer schools took place in July and August at the Model Schools, Marlborough Street, Dublin, and covered topics such as music appreciation and orchestral and choral conducting. Many celebrated conductors took part in the courses including Jean Martinon and Thomas Armstrong (a friend of the Smith family). Smith made useful contacts with a number of celebrated musicians and conductors through these summer schools; she established life-long friendships with many of the musicians and often sought their advice on MAI matters.⁴⁴¹

In the following sections, I will concentrate on Smith's important contributions to the Association. These include the Bach Bi-centenary (1950), Concert and Assembly Hall Ltd./National Concert Hall (1951), Bax Commemorative Concerts (1954), the New London String Quartet Tour (1954), Country Tours (1954), 'Coming-Out' Recitals (1957), Handel Festival (1959), Schools' Recitals Scheme (1967), Ógra Ceoil (1967) and the Irish Youth Orchestra (1970).

5.4 Bach bi-centenary (1950)

In 1950, MAI (with Smith as its main organiser) embarked upon an ambitious and successful programme celebrating the bi-centenary of J.S. Bach's death.⁴⁴² In early May, Olive Smith sent letters to MAI members and others who might be interested in taking part in the celebration. On 27 May, she placed an advertisement in various newspapers, one of which appeared in *The Irish Times* entitled "Backers for Bach Wanted", requesting those interested in the subscription concerts to contact her at Rockview, Torquay Road, Foxrock, Co. Dublin (see fig. 16).⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹ Gillian Smith, interview by author, Dublin, 29 March, 2010.

⁴⁴² Olive Smith also sang with the Culwick Choral Society

⁴⁴³ "Backers for Bach Wanted," *The Irish Times*, 27 May 1950.

Backers for Bach Wanted

The Music Association of Ireland are looking for members for a Guarantee Fund to back their Bach Memorial Concerts, scheduled for September and October this year.

On September 29th the B minor Mass will be performed by the Culwick Choral Society, with Cór Radio Éireann and the RÉ Symphony Orchestra. On October 20th two Cantatas, the Suite in D and two Brandenburg Concertos will be given by the Clontarf Choral Society and the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra. Both will be subscription concerts and will be held in the Metropolitan Hall, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin.

Music lovers intending to support the Guarantee Fund are asked to get in touch with the Hon. Treasurer of the Association, Mrs Lyall Smith, Rockview, Torquay Road, Foxrock, Co. Dublin.

Figure 16. "Backers for Bach Wanted," *The Irish Times*, 27 May, 1950.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the MAI had unsuccessfully attempted to organise a series of concerts with the RÉSO in 1949 but, by this time, the problems associated with RÉSO were resolved.⁴⁴⁴ MAI's first concert on 29 September, 1950, at the Metropolitan Hall, Abbey Street, Dublin, featured Bach's *Mass in B minor* performed by the RÉSO, conducted by Otto Matzerath, Cór RÉ and the Culwick Choral Society.⁴⁴⁵ This was followed by a second concert on 20 October which also featured the RÉSO and Clontarf Choral Society.⁴⁴⁶ Apart from a wonderful performance of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 and some exquisite

⁴⁴⁴ Complications arose between RÉSO and the MAI regarding the orchestra's policy of charging a fee for concerts organised in association with outside organisations charging admission fees. See Chapter 3 for further information.

⁴⁴⁵ Soloists at this concert on 29 September, 1950 included; Margaret Field-Hyde (soprano), Anne Wood (contralto), Ronald Bristol (tenor) and Owen Brannigan (bass) as well as George Eskdale and Bramwell Wiggins from the UK who played trumpets in D.

⁴⁴⁶ This concert was conducted by Sixten Eckerberg, led by MAI Council member, Nancie Lord, soloists included; Richard Lewis (tenor), Richard Standen (bass), John Beckett (harpsichord), Rienzo Marchionni (violin), André Prieur and Tom Browne (flutes). The programme included two cantatas; *Thou Guide of Israel* and *The Sages of Sheba*, Suite No. 3 in D and Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 3 and 4. Concert Programmes, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

singing by Lewis, an *Irish Times* critic described the concert as “a little dull” and criticised the orchestra’s pitch.⁴⁴⁷ A number of ancillary concerts and lectures took place at various venues in Dublin as part of the Bach celebrations.⁴⁴⁸

The organisation of the bi-centenary concerts was an important learning curve for the MAI although, in doing so, it encountered a number of significant obstacles. In early June 1949, it was discovered that no harpsichord of a suitable standard could be located for purchase or hire in the country. Smith, as a last resort, contacted the journalist, Quidnunc, in the hope that he might highlight the MAI’s plight. In his column, ‘An Irishman’s Diary’ in *The Irish Times*, Quidnunc wittily made a plea for an instrument which could be used in Bach’s *Mass in B minor*: “If you are one of those soulless scoundrels who is at present using great-aunt Agatha’s harpsichord as a repository for the assegais carried home in triumph from the Zulu by great-uncle Egbert, I am requested to bid you desist at once. Extract the assegais.”⁴⁴⁹ He recommended that great-niece Millicent, “the talented one” should test the standard of the instrument and, if her playing sounded as it should, “then telephone 83968 at once; ask for Mrs Lyall Smith and say to her: ‘Sleep in peace – your quest is ended – when do you wish to pick up a harpsichord in playable condition?’”⁴⁵⁰ Eventually a harpsichord was located at the National Museum, Dublin. John Beckett played the instrument or, as Smith stated, he “coaxed the instrument along” for both performances (see fig. 17).⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁷ “Bach Commemoration Symphony Concert,” *The Irish Times*, 21 October, 1951.

⁴⁴⁸ Two lectures took place: the first on 25 September with Joseph Grocock speaking about the *B minor Mass* and a second lecture on 9 October with Brian Boydell discussing Bach’s choral and orchestral works. On 8 November, F.C.J. Swanton gave an organ recital at Christ Church, Leeson Park, Dublin, which included Toccata and Fugue in F, Fantasia and Fugue in G minor, a Sonata, various choral preludes and the recital was preceded by a talk by W.J. Watson. The series closed with a joint organ recital by Joseph Grocock and W.J. Watson at the Centenary Church, St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin, on 15 November. Their programme included Prelude and Fugues in B and E minor and a number of choral preludes. Concert Programmes, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁴⁹ “An Irishman’s Diary,” *The Irish Times*, 29 June, 1950.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Much refurbishment was required on the eighteenth-century harpsichord housed at the National Museum and, despite new strings, quills and some overhauling, Beckett was forced to transpose his part up a semitone. Olive Smith, “The Bach Bi-Centenary,” *Counterpoint* (April 1978), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 8.



**Figure 17. Examining the Weber harpsichord at the National Museum, Dublin (1950).
Left to right: Olive Smith, Brian Boydell, Brian Beckett (seated) and Otto Matzerath.**

It is clear from MAI *Monthly Bulletins* at the time that the Association was anxious about the project because it had never undertaken one of this magnitude before. By organising a guarantee-against-loss fund and encouraging members to purchase tickets early it hoped to save the Association any unnecessary advertising expenses.

According to Smith, the series was a turning point for the fledgling Association as it provided publicity and encouraged it to plan and organise similar large-scale projects.⁴⁵² She stated that

... the reaction of the musical public was very encouraging, all the concerts and recitals being well attended. It was the performance of the B minor Mass which aroused the greatest interest and drew an audience of almost 1,000. I shall never forget the wonderful atmosphere of expectancy and excitement in the over-flowing hall that night as the audience awaited the entrance of the conductor. It was

⁴⁵² Ibid.

electrifying and the tension was maintained right through the performance (during which, be it noted, there was no interval). It was a rewarding and thrilling experience for all who had come together to honour the memory of J.S. Bach. The experience gained by organising this commemoration was very important in the life of the MAI.⁴⁵³

MAI honorary secretary, Anthony Farrington, echoed similar views in his *Honorary Secretary's Report* (1950), suggesting that the "advertisement and credit which the MAI has gained and the confidence which the success has inspired has gone far in strengthening the Association's position."⁴⁵⁴

The MAI had now established itself as a credible musical organisation and its new-found confidence marked the beginning of an exciting period in its history. Following the success of the Bach Bi-centenary concerts, the MAI felt that there was a reasonable demand for a national concert hall in Dublin and believed there was a general mood amongst music societies and music lovers that a suitable performance space might soon become a reality.⁴⁵⁵ Quidnunc commended MAI's Bach Bi-centenary Commemoration and it convinced him that the MAI's quest for a national concert hall would be equally successful. Quidnunc opined that the MAI

... with energies unimpaired by a year of impressive activity, is flexing its muscles (or sharpening metronomes, or whatever it is that musicians do when they prepare for action) yet once more. Last year the Association commemorated the late Johann Sebastian Bach with fanatical thoroughness. This year, the annual general meeting turned its attention to the provision of a concert hall for Dublin ... With the sterling example of the theatrical profession – which has been able to announce that Dublin will have a new playhouse in two year's time - to spur it on, and with the drive it has shown in all activities in mind, I should not be too surprised if the Musical Association is able to produce its concert hall in double quick time.⁴⁵⁶

5.5 Early crusades for a National Concert Hall

The MAI's third objective was to work for the establishment of a national concert hall. In its Memorandum (1949), the MAI described the lack of a national concert hall in Ireland as "nearly unique. It testifies to a regrettably primitive state of affairs in certain respects, and gives an impression of a lack of esteem for cultural/spiritual values."⁴⁵⁷ Similar

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 9

⁴⁵⁴ MAI, *1950 Honorary Secretary's Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ "An Irishman's Diary: Concert Hall," *The Irish Times*, 31 January, 1951.

⁴⁵⁷ McMullin, "A National Concert Hall," 1-2.

to the MAI's approach in improving conditions for composers, the MAI blamed the Government for not putting a value on a national concert hall and argued that expenditure on a new concert hall should be regarded as expenditure on education. McMullin opined that money

... can be found by the government for anything that is thought sufficiently important, and while we are aware that some of our proposals would involve a certain outlay, the sums would be nothing extraordinary in comparison with what has already spent on relatively unnecessary things.⁴⁵⁸

He continued this theme by stating that such expenditure would offset materialism, particularly as Ireland was "one of the most materialistic administrations this side of the Iron Curtain"⁴⁵⁹ and accused the government of "official contempt and cynical indifference" towards music.⁴⁶⁰ It is little wonder officials in RE/Department of P&T were "riled" by MAI accusations.⁴⁶¹

In the 1940s, the Theatre Royal, Rotunda, Gaiety Theatre, Capitol Theatre, the Phoenix Hall and the Round Room of the Mansion House were the main venues for theatrical and concert performances in Dublin. The seating capacity of the largest of these venues, the Theatre Royal, was approximately 3,700 and the venue could accommodate a medium-sized orchestra and choir.⁴⁶² In addition to acting as a space for the performance of plays, operas and musicals, the Theatre Royal served as a cinema. Frederick May noted this unsatisfactory multifarious usage of such theatres and complained that Dublin

... which protests its love for music and then reduces its musicians to peddling their wares in cinema houses and theatres, makes a sorry picture by comparison [to the Musikvereinsaal, Vienna], and shows but too clearly how low music in Ireland is held in the public esteem. Large-scale performances are here dependent upon the goodwill of theatre-owners or managers, whose prime interests inevitably lie elsewhere.⁴⁶³

Despite the abundance of venues to cater for the performance of music of various genres in Dublin and in provincial centres, the MAI was determined that the conversion of an existing venue or, preferably, the erection of a purpose-built space was necessary to meet adequately the needs of the capital city. The space envisioned by the MAI was a concert hall/conference

⁴⁵⁸ McMullin, "Conclusion," 2.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁶¹ Pine, *Music and Broadcasting*, 128.

⁴⁶² For further information see Philip B. Ryan, *The Lost Theatres of Dublin* (Wiltshire: The Badger Press, 1998).

⁴⁶³ May, "The Composer in Ireland," 166.

centre which would rival concert halls in other European countries and would be a space worthy of a nation trying to divest itself of the image of a backward, colonial nation and reinvent itself to assume the role of a dynamic cultural force in society. The quest for a national concert hall would consume the energies of MAI committees over three decades, reflecting political, social and cultural changes in Irish society and, ultimately, the path towards Ireland's development as a modern musical nation. The tireless efforts and dynamism of one particular committee member over this long period, Olive Smith, contributed significantly to the ultimate realisation of a national concert hall.

The MAI was not the first to lobby for the establishment of a national concert hall. Robert Prescott Stewart, in his list of nine reforms or improvements for music education in Ireland in the nineteenth-century, recommended the provision of "a good concert hall, with a really fine organ, on which public performances could take place at stated times and at low admission fees".⁴⁶⁴ As early as 1936, P.J. Little proposed to his colleague, Seán MacEntee,⁴⁶⁵ Minister for Finance, the formation of a national symphony orchestra and the provision of a concert hall. The proposal was supported by the Department of Finance's Assistant Secretary, H.P. Boland, and resulted in the drafting of a Memorandum for Government entitled 'A Concert Hall for Dublin' (1 September, 1936). The Memorandum recommended combining the Radio Éireann Orchestra with the No. 1 Army Band to form a National Symphony Orchestra which would be housed in a refurbished and extended Rotunda Hall, Parnell Square, Dublin.⁴⁶⁶ The proposal, however, was rejected as it was not a priority for government and this rejection would be the first of many from political parties over the course of the next three decades. Considering the high levels of emigration and unemployment in Ireland during the 1930s and 1940s, it is understandable why the erection or refurbishment of a concert hall was not a priority.⁴⁶⁷ Government at this time was prioritising development in areas such as Drimnagh and Crumlin which were "without any of the essential social amenities ... no parks, no playing fields, no town halls. No schools were

⁴⁶⁴ Parker, "For the Purpose of Public Music Education," 204.

⁴⁶⁵ Seán MacEntee (1889-1984), Fianna Fáil TD (1926-1965), Minister for Finance, Industry and Commerce, Local Government and Public Health, Health, Social Welfare and Tánaiste.

⁴⁶⁶ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 41.

⁴⁶⁷ Between 1936 and 1946, 187,000 people emigrated from Ireland. Brown, *Ireland, A Social and Cultural History* (2004), 174.

provided at first ... no factories, no technical schools, no secondary schools, no football grounds."⁴⁶⁸

During his tenure as Minister for P&T, Little made several attempts to highlight the urgent need for a concert hall but failed in 1939 and again in 1942.⁴⁶⁹ In January 1946, a committee comprising of Ministers for Local Government and Public Health, (MacEntee), Posts and Telegraphs (Little) and Lands (Seán Moylan)⁴⁷⁰ entered into negotiations with the Rotunda authorities with the intention of securing a lease costing £2,000 per annum and carrying out refurbishment to the building estimated at £150,000. Little's vision for the Rotunda site consisted of a space housing a national centre for the arts which would be managed by a Council of Culture.⁴⁷¹ Negotiations, however, proved fruitless, largely due to the escalating costs of repair and refurbishment which were eventually estimated at over £500,000.⁴⁷²

A change of government in 1948 signalled a new departure in the quest for a national concert hall. The formation of the MAI in that year was fortuitous and, from its ranks, a committed group of musicians and philanthropists commenced the process of realising an appropriate space for concert performances. It is evident from initial correspondence between Olive Smith (honorary treasurer) and Lord Moyne (MAI Council member) that he and other prominent figures in the Association felt that a new concert hall was not necessary and preferred instead to identify venues which could be converted into a suitable concert hall. In a letter to Smith in late 1950, Moyne suggested that the Round Room of the Rotunda Hospital, built in the eighteenth-century, might be converted for approximately £15,000, subject to the status of the lease. He emphasised the necessity to establish a committed core audience and, as their numbers would grow, so too would the demand for a larger venue.⁴⁷³ Moyne played a central role in the early negotiations for a concert hall and utilised his important connections with the Cumann na nGaedheal party and, in particular, An Taoiseach, John A. Costello, to discuss informally the possibility of funding such a project. Though the response was

⁴⁶⁸ T.W.T. Dillon, "Slum Clearance: Past and Present," *Studies* 34, no. 133 (March 1945): 64.

⁴⁶⁹ Little proposed that government acquire the Capitol Theatre in 1942 but his proposal was not supported by the Department of Finance. For further information on attempts to establish a concert hall for Dublin see Brian P. Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and the Arts in Independent Ireland* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1990).

⁴⁷⁰ Seán Moylan (1888-1957), Fianna Fáil TD (1932-1957), Minister for Lands, Education, Agriculture.

⁴⁷¹ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 53.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

⁴⁷³ Letter from Lord Moyne, Knockmaroon, Castleknock, Dublin, to Olive Smith on 31 October, 1950, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

favourable, Moyne stated that Costello felt it was not the appropriate time to undertake “any large public building scheme” as there was a shortage of skilled labour and materials in the building industry.⁴⁷⁴ Costello is also reported to have expressed the view that such projects should not be undertaken at a time when unemployment was at a high level, and when more pressing matters, such as the shortage of housing, required urgent attention.⁴⁷⁵ Vigorous attempts to create employment and foster industry in the country were made by the Inter-party Government⁴⁷⁶ and, politically, this eclipsed the need for a national concert hall. As attempts at securing government funding were unsuccessful at this stage, Moyne opined that donations from private companies, as opposed to private subscriptions from individuals, might have a better hope of success.⁴⁷⁷

5.6 MAI Concert Hall Committee

The perceived lack of progress in advancing the national concert hall from 1948 to 1950 prompted the MAI to establish a special committee entrusted with the sole responsibility of focusing on all matters relating to the project. In February 1951, the MAI formed a Concert Hall Committee to commence negotiations with government officials, representatives of Dublin Corporation and philanthropic individuals with a view to obtaining a suitable site for a national concert hall. The committee envisaged a primary concert hall with a capacity of 1,500 to 2,000, suitable for concerts, *feiseanna* (competitions), public meetings, civic functions and conferences. Preliminary plans also included a number of ancillary rooms and a smaller hall which could be hired out as a rehearsal space or to facilitate recitals and meetings. The committee consisted of seven members: Edgar M. Deale (chairman), Olive Smith (honorary secretary), Seymour Leslie, P.J. Malone, Leon Ó Dubhghaill (An t-Oireachtas chairperson), Michael Scott (architect) and Rev Dr. Richard MacNevin (representing the Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough Street, Dublin). P.J. Little T.D., Maurice Dockrill T.D., Fr. Cormac Daly OFM (representing St. Adam and Eve’s Church, Merchants’ Quay, Dublin) and John McCann T.D. were co-opted. The committee focused on the following four objectives outlined in its terms of reference:

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁶ These included the introduction of new grant incentives to set up industries and special agencies, such as the Industrial Development Authority (IDA, 1949) and An Foras Tionscail (Grants Board, 1952) and formed part of the Inter-party Government’s policy of industrialisation.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

1. to consider and procure a site for a concert hall in Dublin
2. to examine other possible interested parties and concert-promoting bodies
3. to give an account of all findings and make recommendations to the MAI Council
4. to appoint its own chairman and secretary and co-opt members as they see fit.⁴⁷⁸

The initial priority of the committee was to seek the co-operation of concert-promoting bodies and other interested parties. As honorary secretary, Olive Smith, was assigned the task of corresponding with influential organisations (professional and amateur) and performing groups, primarily in Dublin, with a view to garnering support for the concert hall project. The response was very encouraging, prompting committee members to prepare a document which would eventually take the form of a memorandum to the Taoiseach.⁴⁷⁹ The approach taken in this memorandum was to rehearse the stereotypical representation of Ireland as a neglected, backward musical nation languishing in the shadow of a vibrant tradition of literature and folk music. It was noted that if

... the authorities are not agreeable to spend money on music our progress as a musical nation in the twentieth century must be deferred ... it is quite clear that there is also an increasing determination among music-loving people in Dublin to remedy this lack and to remove the slur of our being the only European city without a concert hall.⁴⁸⁰

This perceived cultural disparity between Dublin and other capital cities was consistently stressed during MAI's long-sustained campaign and, here again, the MAI conveniently overlooked the fact that Dublin already had a number of concert halls, but what it was campaigning for was a national concert hall. At this time, the MAI's Concert Hall Committee might have had provided a better and more obvious argument for a National Opera House to serve the needs of opera, ballet and musical theatre but, for unknown reasons, it was never perceived by the Association as a priority or even a concern.⁴⁸¹ White notes that "the

⁴⁷⁸ MAI, *A Dream Comes True: The Story of the Music Association of Ireland*, 1968 (manuscript), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11, 2.

⁴⁷⁹ Letters of support were received from Feis Ceoil, Culwick Choral Society, Irish Musical Society, Clontarf Choral Society, Dublin Orchestral Players, Our Lady's Choral Society, Conradh na Gaeilge, Irish Federation of Musicians, Dublin Trade Union, Royal Irish Academy of Music and Leinster School of Music, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁸⁰ Copy of Memorandum sent by Olive Smith to John McCann T.D. and to An Taoiseach on 5 July, 1951, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁸¹ Áine Sheil's "Opera Production in Ireland: No Place for Politics?" *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland* 5 (2009-2010) discusses the issue of official and commercial patronage of opera.

peripheral status of opera in Ireland by comparison with its organic presence in Europe”⁴⁸² which, by his account, remains incongruous given the contribution of Irish composers to this musical genre.⁴⁸³ Irish composers (e.g. Ina Boyle, John Buckley, Aloys Fleischmann, Redmond Friel, Bernard Geary, Elizabeth Maconchy, Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair, Seán Ó Riada, A.J. Potter) had also composed music for the very successful Irish National Ballet Company (1973-1989). Disinterest among the MAI personnel in all forms of music for theatre was arguably one of the Association’s lost opportunities to champion a real need within the capital’s musical infrastructure which, sadly, devoid of attention, remains the situation today.⁴⁸⁴

During 1951 and 1952, Smith became the central figure in the campaign and, ably assisted by Deale, initiated a series of letter-writing campaigns which resulted in more overt support for the concert hall project from prominent national and international figures connected with all branches of the arts. Following the destruction of the Abbey Theatre by fire in July, 1951, Deale was instructed by the committee to contact Ernest Blythe,⁴⁸⁵ director of the Abbey, about the prospect of acquiring a joint site for the Abbey Theatre and a national concert hall. MAI expressed the view that the prospect of creating a purpose-built space for musical and theatrical performances could have established Dublin as a formidable centre of literary and musical excellence; however, the Abbey was not interested in a joint scheme with the MAI.⁴⁸⁶ A similar approach was made to the Gate Theatre which, despite a ten month silence after initial contact by Smith, was persuaded of the merits of a joint venture at the Rotunda that could be used for various types of cultural and sporting events. Hilton Edwards’ private secretary, Arthur Drapes, sent a comprehensive eleven point plan regarding the building of a combined concert hall and modern theatre to Olive Smith on 5 December, 1951, describing Edwards and MacLiammóir as “definitely interested in the idea”.⁴⁸⁷ They proposed “a semi-circular auditorium with a large and quite elaborate apron stage and a

⁴⁸² Harry White, “Cultural Theory, Nostalgia and the Historical Record,” in *Music in Ireland in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 16-17.

⁴⁸³ For an account of opera in Ireland see Axel Klein, “Stage-Irish, or the National in Irish Opera, 1780-1925,” *The Opera Quarterly* 21, no.1 (Winter 2005), 27-67.

⁴⁸⁴ It could be argued that composers of the MAI composed primarily orchestral, instrumental and vocal music and that the pursuance of an Opera House did not serve their individual or collective purpose(s).

⁴⁸⁵ Ernest Blythe (1889-1975), Sinn Féin, Cumann na nGaedheal and Fine Gael TD (1918-1932), Minister for Trade and Commerce, Local Government, Finance and Posts and Telegraphs. He was also Managing Director of the Abbey Theatre (1947-1967).

⁴⁸⁶ No specific reason was given by the Abbey, other than the fact that it wished to build a new theatre on its own. Letter from Ernest Blythe to Deale, 24 September, 1951, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁸⁷ Letter from Hilton Edwards to Olive Smith on 5 December, 1951, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

rudimentary proscenium” which would be less conventional than any building in Dublin.⁴⁸⁸ The MAI Archive reveals that provision for such a state-of-the-art building appealed to the MAI. Edwards explained that the building would

... supply a long voiced demand in Dublin for a concert hall; it would satisfy our immediate problem; it would open a new and exciting vista for the theatre in this country; it would give a refreshing stimulus to the production of opera in a manner hitherto untouched over here. In fact, it could, if intelligently used, infuse new blood into the Irish Theatre. I suggest that a new form is often stimulating to new ideas and may well give a spur to writers.⁴⁸⁹

Negotiations reached an advanced stage but, after much deliberation and correspondence, the joint venture was not pursued by the MAI committee as it felt that the venue was too small for its purposes and the lease was too expensive to buy out.⁴⁹⁰ More importantly, the MAI expressed the view that any financial commitments made “would detract from the effort to provide a large hall,” its primary objective.⁴⁹¹

With a number of sites under investigation,⁴⁹² the MAI’s next move was to enlist the support of past guest conductors, soloists and foreign acquaintances of the RÉSO in order to strengthen its hand in negotiations with the government. Smith corresponded with many of the leading contemporary conductors and performers in a concerted effort to raise the profile of the concert hall project at international level. Letters of support were received from conductors, composers and soloists who had previously performed in Ireland, for example, Arnold Bax, Hugh Robertson, Carlo Zecchi, Jean Martinon, Sir Adrian Boult, Sir Malcolm Sargent and Margaret Burke Sheridan. It was generally acknowledged by them that venues with poor acoustics, inadequate changing facilities and utilised for purposes other than musical performances were not appropriate. Sir John Barbirolli, a great admirer of Georgian Dublin, particularly welcomed the news of Dublin’s proposed concert hall.

I have heard with great interest that at long last an effort is to be made to provide Dublin with a concert hall ... you have for so long been able to bear with equanimity the stigma and indignity of being without a concert hall fit for orchestras, who, with

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Various correspondence between Olive Smith and Hilton Edwards, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁹¹ Copy of letter sent by Olive Smith to Hilton Edwards (no date), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁹² At this time, the committee was investigating alternative sites at the Old Blue Coat School (Blackhall Place), the Foundling Hospital (Kilmainham), Phoenix Hall (Phoenix Park), a site in Parnell Square, another site at the Mansion House and car parks at Golden Lane and Merchants’ Quay. MAI, *Summary of Concert Hall Suggestions* (no date), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

affection and pleasure, would be made much happier were they enabled to perform in conditions which would more worthily enable them to do justice to your discriminating musical public.⁴⁹³

By May 1952, it was apparent that the intensive campaign of the Concert Hall Committee during the previous year had gained considerable recognition and support at national and international level. During the latter half of 1952, the Concert Hall Committee, bolstered by unprecedented support, relentlessly pursued the City Manager and members of Dublin Corporation in the hope that a site might be secured immediately and an impetus given to commence construction. A survey of correspondence between Olive Smith and members of the Corporation, including M.P. Wallace, secretary of the Town Planning Committee, reflects Smith's admirable advocacy and passion for her cause and her impressive grasp of the intricacies of site acquisitions and planning laws. In one piece of correspondence, Wallace informed Smith that he had identified two suitable sites in the city centre; she quickly responded that those particular sites had already been discussed "twice before".⁴⁹⁴ Unfortunately, no further progress was made by the Concert Hall Committee for the remainder of 1952 and, "after consultation with several prominent Dublin citizens," it was decided to "form a small company" to continue the work begun by the MAI.⁴⁹⁵

5.7 Concert and Assembly Hall Ltd. (1952)

On 8 December, 1952, the MAI's Concert Hall Committee was incorporated as a limited company, Concert and Assembly Hall Ltd. (CAH). Its *Memorandum* and *Articles of Association* were prepared by Arthur Cox and Co. Solicitors, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, and its primary objectives can be summarised as follows:

1. to build a public concert hall in Dublin with assembly rooms to promote and develop an appreciation of the arts
2. to manage all aspects of the venue, including advertisement of concerts, operas, plays and other productions
3. to facilitate the promotion of the venue as a profit-making enterprise for relevant businesses
4. to negotiate and engage with concert-promoting bodies, artists, etc.

⁴⁹³ Letter from Sir John Barbiroli to Olive Smith, 12 February, 1952, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁹⁴ Letter from Olive Smith to M.P. Wallace (Town Planning Committee secretary) 8 March, 1952, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁹⁵ "Concert Hall Project Advances," *The Irish Times*, 10 December, 1952.

5. to purchase or lease land, machinery, patents, etc. which would directly benefit the company
6. to borrow money or issue shares with a view to deriving revenue or income for the plans of the company
7. to accept funding or grants from Government or municipal authorities which could be used to promote the objectives of the company
8. to raise money for the purposes of the company by means of subscriptions, collections, gifts, donations or grants from the public or from any governmental, local or other authority or body, or otherwise howsoever, upon and subject to such terms and conditions as the company shall think fit.⁴⁹⁶

According to its *Articles of Association*, seven directors were appointed to the company, including two appointed by the Council of the MAI (see table 5.1 and fig. 18), with each director contributing £25 to sustain the company financially through its launch period.⁴⁹⁷

Table 5.1. Directors of Concert and Assembly Hall Ltd (1952)

Name	Role	Occupation
Mabel Olive Smith (MAI)	Secretary	Administrator
Alexander Wallace Bayne	Director	Businessman
Lawrence Peter Kennedy	Director	Businessman
Augustus Percival Reynolds	Chairman	Businessman
Edgar Martin Deale (MAI)	Director	Insurance manager and composer
Bryan Walter Guinness ⁴⁹⁸	Director	Businessman
Michael Scott	Director	Architect

Source: MAI, MAI Memorandum and Articles of Association (1952), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁹⁶ MAI, *MAI Memorandum and Articles of Association* (1952), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁴⁹⁷ CAH had three classes of membership: twelve permanent members, a maximum of twenty-one MAI members and subscription members who donated £100 towards its funds *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁹⁸ Bryan Walter Guinness (Lord Moyne).

Concert hall project advances

A COMPANY, called "Concert and Assembly Halls, Ltd.," has been formed to continue the work begun by the Music Association of Ireland to provide a concert hall for Dublin.

The Association states that, after consultation with several prominent Dublin citizens, it realised the necessity to form a small company. The first directors of the company are: Mr. A. W. Bayne, Mr. Lawrence Kennedy, Lord Moyne, Mr. A. P. Reynolds, Mr. Michael Scott, Mr. Edgar Deale and Mrs. Lyall Smith. Mr. Deale and Mrs. Smith were appointed by the Music Association.

The Association feels that the building of a concert and assembly hall would remove the slur on Dublin of being the only European capital without a concert hall. It is thought that if Dublin had such a hall it would be able to accommodate its share of international conventions and the like, and so help the tourist trade, and stimulate the business life of the city.

A committee was set up in February, 1951, by the Council of the Music Association to consider ways of providing a suitable concert hall.

TO SEAT 1,500-2,000

The building which the Association has in mind would comprise a large auditorium, seating between 1,500 and 2,000 people, suitable for concerts, *feis*, public meetings, civic functions and conventions; a smaller hall suitable for recitals; and rehearsal rooms and studios, which would bring in a steady income.

The Association says that Radio Eireann is most sympathetic towards the project. It is understood that the broadcasting authorities would use the building, not only for concerts, but also for rehearsals and studio broadcasts. The Dublin Corporation Town Planning Committee has now given its approval of a site which the Association thinks would be excellent in every respect.

Letters have already been received from 17 bodies, musical and non-musical, approving the project.

It is also stated that, at a meeting of the musical societies in connection with An Tóstal, the lack of a concert and assembly hall was felt to be an almost insuperable difficulty in putting on any large musical performance.

Figure 18. "Concert Hall Project Advances," *The Irish Times*, 10 December, 1952.

From the outset, directors and permanent members were proactive in the search for an appropriate site. Cognisant of its limited resources and the necessity to align itself with organisations promoting Irish culture abroad, CAH contacted Bord Fáilte⁴⁹⁹ and An Tóstal⁵⁰⁰ with the intention of promoting the cause of a concert hall and conference centre which could rival any international venue.

Appendix G shows that investigations and negotiations in respect of sites in Dublin and the greater Dublin area consumed much of the initial enthusiasm of the directors and members between 1952 and 1961 and lists the venues explored by CAH and decisions made about their suitability.

⁴⁹⁹ Bord Fáilte, the Irish Tourist Board was founded in 1952.

⁵⁰⁰ An Tóstal (1953-1958) was a series of festivals held throughout Ireland celebrating Irish culture.

The early 1960s was marked by the initiation of a fundraising campaign which raised approximately £3,000 from various concerts at the Theatre Royal, the Olympia Theatre and the Mansion House, as well as a number of other venues throughout the city. CAH organised a concert at the Theatre Royal on 15 January, 1960, with Tibor Paul conducting the RÉSÓ and featured solo violinist, Giaconda de Vito.⁵⁰¹ The committee sold 3,200 tickets for the concert, which was attended by the President, Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Lord Mayor, members of the government and diplomatic corps. When all expenses were paid, the concert realised a profit of £1,000. Charles Acton commented that the concert proved four things: firstly, that the full house showed the demand for a concert hall; secondly, that the standard of the RÉSÓ was equal to any visiting orchestras at that time; thirdly, that the venue, though admirable for its purpose, was unsuitable for concerts; and finally, that the soloist, Giaconda de Vito, was a fantastic artist. Overall, Acton was very positive in his critique of the concert and described it as a great success and that it “was only the beginning of a campaign which must be waged relentlessly until we have the concert hall we need and want.”⁵⁰²

Believing the concert’s success to be a clear signal of public support for a concert hall, the MAI decided to contact music societies and individuals to organise events, concerts, gramophone recitals and tennis and bridge outings countrywide to raise funds for the hall.⁵⁰³ A Concert Hall Junior Committee, comprising of music enthusiasts and students, raised funds at dances and other social events.⁵⁰⁴ An Autumn Fair was organised by Olive Smith at the Mansion House on 26 October, 1960, to fundraise for the concert hall. During the early 1960s, the campaign for the concert hall had gained significant momentum and succeeded in creating solidarity and a sense of purpose amongst amateur and professional musicians, particularly in Dublin (see Appendix H). This type of fundraising, though meritorious, did not generate significant funds and, if it were the only source of revenue, it would have taken generations to realise a concert hall. Consequently, CAH successfully applied to Dublin Corporation for a grant of £125,000, representing one third of the total cost on condition that CAH provide the balance required.

⁵⁰¹ The programme included; Violin Concerto in D major by Brahms, Overture to *The Sicilian Vespers* by Verdi, Ballet Suite from *Careless Love* by A.J. Potter and Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 by Beethoven. Concert Programmes, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁵⁰² “Good House at Theatre Royal,” *The Irish Times* 16 January, 1960.

⁵⁰³ Information obtained from a copy of standard letter sent to music organisations by Olive Smith on 12 February, 1960, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁵⁰⁴ Letter from Concert Hall Fund Junior Committee to Olive Smith on 28 April, 1960, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

At this time, the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) planned to extend its concert hall at Ballsbridge and requested an interest-free loan from government. As the RDS and CAH had common interests, negotiations between both organisations were initiated. Olive Smith wrote on 27 March, 1961, to James Meenan, chairman of the Executive Council of the RDS confirming their agreement that the Society would provide CAH with a free site but would control and manage the project and that CAH would continue to organise fundraising activities. A statement to this effect was issued to the press on 27 April, 1961.⁵⁰⁵ However, by early 1962, it was apparent each side had different objectives; the RDS wanted to renovate and extend its current concert hall and since it was not prepared to recommend CAH's preferred purpose-built space to their Council, each side went their separate ways.⁵⁰⁶ This breakdown in communication was recorded in the *Evening Press* of 22 September, 1962. The article condemned CAH for not compromising on the RDS's plan to convert its concert hall at a cost of £200,000 with a seating capacity of 1,500. The reporter stated that the CAH had decided to "go it alone" and would seek funding of £1 million from government and public donations.⁵⁰⁷ This figure of £1 million had never before been mentioned by the MAI and Frederick May correctly described the article as misleading. However, it provoked the ire of several readers who expressed their disgust at CAH's insistence on the erection of a purpose-built hall.⁵⁰⁸ One reader, P.R. McCarthy, described CAH as "digging in its heels on the issue" of a new concert hall, a stance which would not be supported by music-lovers or those who subscribed to the fund. McCarthy continued: "Let them climb down from their lofty ivory tower before they earn themselves public hostility, and let the R.D.S. take over the project. There has been too much talk and too little action."⁵⁰⁹

Another letter to the paper claimed that people wanted "an adequate concert hall and not necessarily a new one."⁵¹⁰ This writer stated that he/she would prefer the RDS to run the new concert hall as it had proven expertise in the area, which suggests that some people questioned CAH's ability to administer the hall. Finally, the writer complained that "we are back to the campaign of having fund-raising concerts that are poorly attended, and the

⁵⁰⁵ IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 18.

⁵⁰⁶ "Split for Plans over Concert Hall," *Evening Press*, 22 September, 1962.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ "Concert Hall Proposal," *Evening Press*, 28 September, 1962.

⁵⁰⁹ "Concert Hall Lost," *Evening Press*, 24 September, 1962.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

begging letters to the Government.”⁵¹¹ These letters provide an interesting insight into the CAH, its campaign and, ultimately conveying the view that many people were content with renovating an existing hall rather than spending vast sums of money on a purpose-built concert hall. The reference to the “lofty ivory tower” in the first letter suggests that CAH was perceived as being removed from ordinary Irish people and its demands for government funding of a new building were out of touch with reality. Frederick May responded that the RDS’s offer was generous but that it could not be accepted.

But enough of such pettifogging nonsense. Let the Government place the necessary funds at the disposal of Concert and Assembly Hall Ltd., without one further moment of delay, so that a glorious new concert hall may rise up that shall endure for centuries to come as an ornament to our capital city, to the honour and glory of our native land.⁵¹²

A tone of arrogance rang through May’s letter, but this period, the early 1960s, was possibly the first time in the history of the Irish State, that the government was in a position to provide Ireland with a state-of-the-art concert hall. Dr. T.K. Whitaker’s five year plan entitled *Economic Development*, which formed the basis of a new policy adopted by the Fianna Fáil Government in 1958, put Ireland on the path of recovery after a period which witnessed the shrinking of the economy by 1% per annum (1951-1957). The new plan marked a significant turnabout and the economy grew by an annual average of 3% during the period 1959 to 1964.⁵¹³ The tenure of Seán Lemass as Taoiseach (1959-1966), together with a global period of sustained growth, heralded a new era. Exports rose by 50% in the period, 1960 to 1966, surpassing predictions and the new economic outlook gave hope to the MAI’s aspiration.

A government statement in January 1964, was to bring to a close CAH’s long search for a suitable site and its associated fundraising efforts. An Taoiseach, Seán T. Lemass, announced that the government proposed to build a national concert hall dedicated to the memory of the late President John F. Kennedy. This was regarded as a significant development and the MAI and CAH passed on to those concerned research and data relating to the concert hall project, which had been accumulated over fourteen years.⁵¹⁴ The announcement stated that “the entire costs of the project” would be borne by the State and not

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² “Concert Hall Proposal,” *Evening Press*, 28 September, 1962.

⁵¹³ Joseph Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 346.

⁵¹⁴ Statement issued by the Government Information Bureau of the Department of the Taoiseach on 17 January, 1964, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 18.

by public subscription.⁵¹⁵ Finally, the MAI was about to achieve its second objective and, despite the Government taking complete responsibility for the Hall, the MAI firmly believed that it had created the climate that would finally realise its aim. “The Company’s mission was accomplished; it was undoubtedly its work and the work of the M.A.I. over the years which had created the climate in which the Government could take this step.”⁵¹⁶

Letters of congratulations were received at the MAI’s office, with many giving credit to CAH and, especially to Olive Smith, for her years of dedication to the cause. Aloys Fleischmann wrote to Olive Smith stating that without her “years of unremitting toil, no such decision would ever have been taken, and it was the efforts of Concert and Assembly Hall Ltd. which prepared the ground for what is probably the biggest gesture made to music since the state was founded.”⁵¹⁷ Violinist, Geraldine O’Grady, congratulated Olive Smith on her “wonderful victory” and declared that, had it not been for Smith’s “great courage and determination in keeping the idea alive and in front of the public, this generation would never have seen this memorable day.”⁵¹⁸ To mark the opening of the Kennedy Memorial Hall, CAH announced a competition for the composition of an orchestral piece with a prize of £250; CAH would bear publishing costs and would sponsor its performance at the opening of the Hall.⁵¹⁹

Although CAH offered its assistance to the Minister for Finance, this offer was met with a cool reception.⁵²⁰ No explanation for this response is mentioned in the MAI Archive; perhaps the AC and other government bodies felt they possessed greater expertise than the MAI. Unfortunately, as has been well documented in *The National Concert Hall at Earlsfort Terrace*, the grand plans for the Kennedy Memorial Hall never materialised. The saga continued for a further eighteen years, by which time, Smith’s participation in the cause had ended.⁵²¹

Frustrated by the continual lack of progress on the issue, the MAI decided to rekindle interest in the concert hall project in 1972. This new campaign was underpinned by publicity and fundraising activities and the formation of a new action committee. The negative tone of

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ MAI, *Monthly Bulletin* (July/August, 1966), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34, 10.

⁵¹⁷ Letter from Aloys Fleischmann to Olive Smith 20 January, 1964, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 18.

⁵¹⁸ Letter from Geraldine O’Grady to Olive Smith on 17 January, 1964, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 18.

⁵¹⁹ MAI, Draft letter for composition competition to mark the Kennedy Memorial Hall, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 18.

⁵²⁰ MAI, *Summary of Concert Hall Saga, 1964*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 18.

⁵²¹ Patricia Butler and Pat O’Kelly, *The National Concert Hall at Earlsfort Terrace* (Dublin: Wolfhound, 2000).

the publicity was obviously due to the disappointment and anger over government inaction in spite of its earlier promises. In *Counterpoint*, Ian Fox wrote

Do you want a Concert Hall? With the Government returned to power, we think it is time they were reminded of their commitment and that pressure was brought to bear on the Inter-Party Committee for some positive action. You can help your Council by sending your own letters of protest to your local TDs of all parties. Point out how long the project has been in Government keeping (1964) and the great need for a satisfactory hall. Also write to the Minister of Finance and protest to him over the continuing delays. Only constant battling will get the project on the move. Now is your chance to assist. Remember letters addressed to Deputies at the Dail or to Ministers at their offices require no stamps.⁵²²

The new Concert Hall Action Committee was established at the MAI's AGM of 1972.⁵²³ Although it was decided that the newly-formed committee would be autonomous and self-financing, the Association would offer what assistance it could and, to this end, it donated £500 to start the concert hall fund. Prior to initiating a fundraising appeal, which was to be managed by an independent professional agency, the new committee decided to operate a pledge system whereby legally enforceable guarantees of financial support would be obtained from private and government sources and the Committee also investigated the possibility of acquiring interest free loans from Dublin Corporation.⁵²⁴ One contentious difference of opinion between successive MAI concert hall committees and governmental agencies was an uncompromising insistence that only an *ab initio* structure built to specific requirements would be good enough to represent a national concert hall. A second issue of difference arose from MAI's claim that, because of its particular understanding and musical expertise, it was best placed to control the running of the new concert hall. However, on this occasion, the Concert Hall Action Committee, in an attempt to avoid further delays, expressed its desire to compromise on both issues.⁵²⁵ The committee set to work by investigating a site at Beggar's Bush Barracks (for which plans had already been drawn up by architect Raymond McGrath in March 1965) but, in spite of its efforts, the project dragged on without any prospect of coming to fruition. Difficulties were probably exacerbated by MAI commentaries with systematic negative rhetoric that tended to provoke a reverse effect on

⁵²² Ian Fox, "Do you Want a Concert Hall?," *Counterpoint* (October 1969), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34: 2.

⁵²³ MAI, *A National Concert Hall* (May 1973), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 47, 2.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

state agencies than that envisaged by their authors. One such piece appeared in *Counterpoint* in June 1974.

So then, what has the Government done regarding a State Concert Hall? The answer must be *nothing*. Why has the Government undertaken to provide RTE with the accommodation at Earlsfort Terrace? The devious thinking seems to be that by so doing it can appear to be fulfilling its commitment by providing a Concert Hall for Dublin.⁵²⁶

In the minds of committed public servants, such rhetoric clouded the clarity of MAI's argument and delayed the project for years. It was not until University College Dublin's Examination Hall, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin was renovated, refurbished and formally opened on 9 September, 1981 that Olive Smith witnessed the conclusion of the project initiated by her and the MAI Council three decades before. Though she played only a minor role on the Concert Hall Action Committee during the 1970s, she concluded that "while it was a great pity that the Kennedy Hall wasn't built, the Terrace Hall, small though it may be in comparison, is certainly a step in the right direction."⁵²⁷ One can identify with the MAI objective of providing a purpose-built concert hall, but Dublin did have a number of concert halls at this time which, if adequately developed, might have suited the purposes of a national concert hall. If the MAI Action Committee had followed Moyne's approach from the beginning, i.e., refurbishing a site, building up a dedicated audience and supplying a demand for a purpose-built space, I believe a hall, such as the current National Concert Hall, but with adequate assembly and ancillary rooms, could have been achieved early in the campaign. Prior to the Government's announcement of the Kennedy Memorial Hall, it was clear a purpose-built space was unachievable and unaffordable. Accordingly, MAI/CAH should have altered its objectives, but instead, it pursued a campaign that garnered limited support. Having spent many years fundraising and investigating sites, Gillian Smith confessed that her mother was particularly disheartened by the outcome.⁵²⁸ Nevertheless, she occupied herself with many other worthwhile and exciting projects in the interim.

5.8 The country tours (1954)

Though much of the early focus of the MAI agenda centred around Dublin and its environs, the Association was also involved in countrywide activities. The Irish pianist,

⁵²⁶ Pat O'Kelly, "The Concert Hall Epic: Episode?," *Counterpoint* (June 1974), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 6.

⁵²⁷ Mary Raftery, "The New Concert Hall," *Soundpost* April/May 1981, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 11.

⁵²⁸ Gillian Smith, interview by author, Dublin, 29 March, 2010.

Charles Lynch, successfully approached the MAI in January 1954, with a view to enlisting its support in the staging of two memorial concerts to celebrate the life and works of Sir Arnold Bax.⁵²⁹ Lynch and the New London String Quartet⁵³⁰ gave the first Irish performance of Bax's *Piano Quintet in G minor* on 30 March, 1954 at the Octagonal Room, Civic Museum, Dublin. A repeat performance was given at the Aula Maxima, University College Cork, on the following evening. The programme also included works by Bax for solo piano and other combinations (see table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Bax Memorial Concert Programme (1954)

Work	Performer(s)
Violin Sonata No. 2 in D (1915, rev. 1922)	Charles Lynch (piano) Francois D'Albert (violin)
<i>A Mountain Mood</i> (1915) <i>Winter Waters</i> (1915) <i>Apple-Blossom Time</i> (1915) <i>In a Vodka Shop</i> (1915)	Charles Lynch (piano)
<i>Folk Tale</i> (1918)	Douglas Cameron (cello) Charles Lynch (piano)
Piano Quintet in G minor (1915)	New London String Quartet Charles Lynch (piano)

Source: Bax Memorial concert programme, 30 March, 1954, at the Octagonal Room, Civic Museum, Dublin, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 5.

It was at these concerts that Smith met and befriended members of the New London String Quartet. In order to keep costs to a minimum, hospitality was provided by members of the MAI and transportation was facilitated by Smith and her "Smith station wagon".⁵³¹ On the return journey from the Cork concert, Douglas Cameron, the quartet's cellist, related his experiences of the provincial Music Clubs in the UK which provided regional areas with performances by professional musicians. Cameron suggested that the MAI might establish

⁵²⁹ Arnold Bax (1883-1953), English composer, poet and Master of the King's Musick (1942-1953).

⁵³⁰ The New London String Quartet comprised of Erich Gruenberg and Lionel Bentley (violins), Keith Cummings (viola) and Douglas Cameron (cello).

⁵³¹ Olive Smith, "Sir Arnold Bax Memorial Concert 1954," *Counterpoint* (May 1979), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 5.

and manage a similar scheme in Ireland and, by the time Smith and the Quartet had reached their destination, the seeds were sown for the MAI's first country tour.⁵³²

The first MAI recital tour was given by the New London String Quartet from 28 October to 6 November, 1954 and it performed at concerts in Sligo, Galway, Clare, Limerick, Carlow, Waterford, Wexford, Kilkenny, Tipperary and culminating with a concert at the Provost's House, TCD. The New London String Quartet's tour enabled people from provincial towns to experience live performances by Irish and international artists in their own locality and paved the way for many such tours involving Irish as well as international artists. Charles Acton later commented that the country tours

... only happened through the tireless energy, idealism and enthusiasm of Olive Smith, the original treasurer ... Her vigorous and controversial personality has moulded the *persona* of the MAI, to a large extent pointed the directions of its activities and ensured its successes.⁵³³

Smith described the tour as an experiment and a triumph, but felt its "enduring value" would remain to be seen.⁵³⁴ Due to the success of its first Irish tour, the London String Quartet returned on 20 October, 1955, for a series of ten concerts around Ireland which, according to Quidnunc, brought "a string quartet to Mullingar, Birr, and Tralee for the first time."⁵³⁵ (see fig. 19).

⁵³² Olive Smith, "The Beginnings of Country Tours," *Counterpoint* (June-August 1979), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 5.

⁵³³ "Twenty-Five Years of the MAI," *The Irish Times*, 30 March, 1973.

⁵³⁴ Olive Smith, "The Beginnings of Country Tours," *Counterpoint* (June-August 1979): 5.

⁵³⁵ "Busy Fiddler," *The Irish Times*, 19 October, 1955. The London String Quartet performed at the Assembly Hall, Mullingar on 20 October (and children's concert at 3.30pm); Assembly Room, Town Hall, Sligo on 21 October; Birr on 22 October; Columban Hall, Galway on 23 October; Cruise's Hotel, Limerick on 24 October; St. John's Hall, Tralee on 25 October; Waterford Music Club on 27 October; Art Gallery, City Vocational School, Kilkenny on 28 October, children's concert in Kilkenny on morning of 29 October; Town Hall, Carlow on 1 November and Wexford on 3 November.

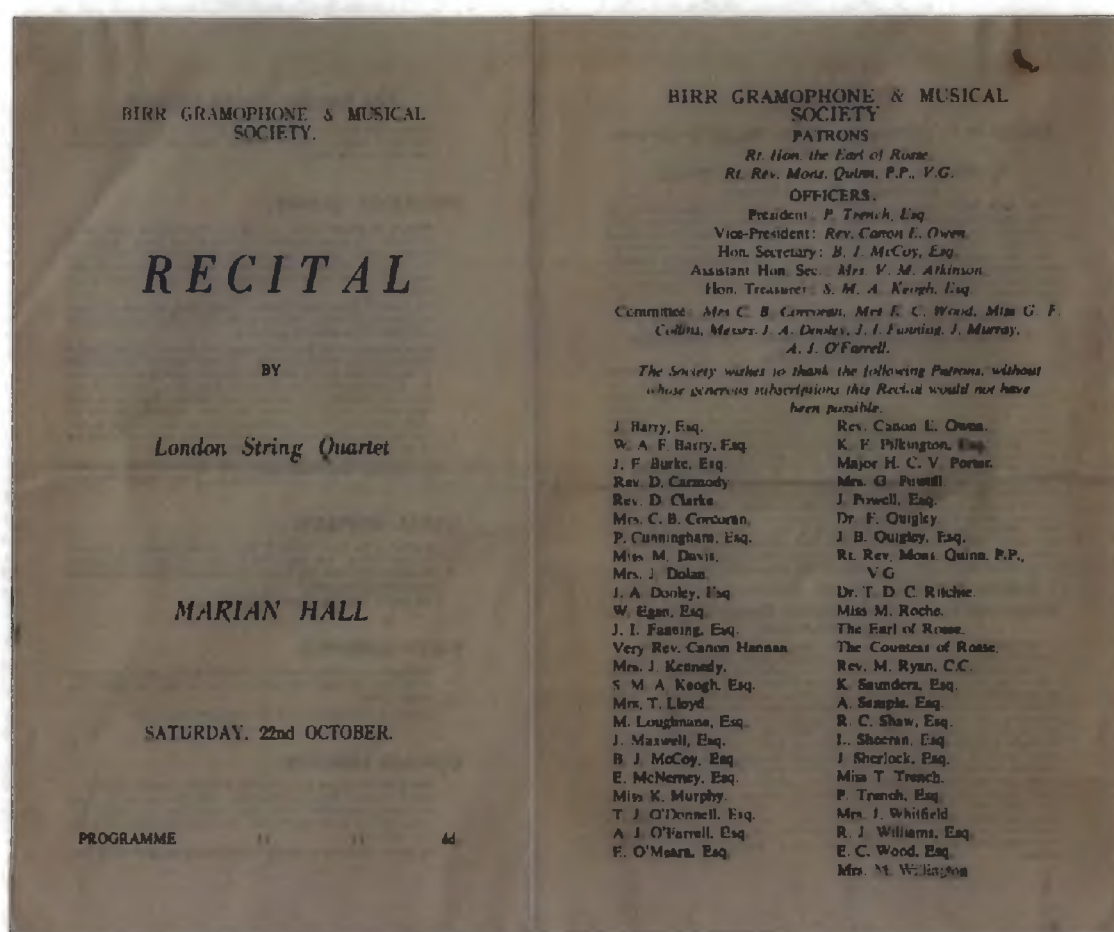


Figure 19. London String Quartet concert programme, Birr, Offaly on 22 October, 1955.

The tour opened with a concert attended by over 200 school children in Mullingar which was preceded by an introductory talk by DoE Inspector, Peter Killian.⁵³⁶ Schools from towns hosting concerts by the London String Quartet were offered afternoon concerts by the MAI, but only two schools engaged the Quartet. From correspondence in the MAI Archive, it is clear that some schools felt that the cost of £5 was prohibitive, some schools did not have suitable halls and others stated that such concerts could not be accommodated within the school timetable. Nonetheless, this attempt to bring live classical music into schools was part of a policy pursued by the MAI from the 1950s and later developed into the Schools Recitals Scheme.

⁵³⁶ A handwritten note on the concert programme for 28 October, 1955, in Kilkenny stated that Peter Killian's commentary at the children's concert on 29 October was too long. IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 14. In a letter to Olive Smith on 5 July, 1955, Aloys Fleischmann stated that previous talks by DoE personnel in Cork were severely criticised by teachers and students. IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 14.

Country tours were arranged by the MAI on an annual basis from 1954 until the mid 1980s and were subsidised mainly by the AC's guarantees-against-loss system. Charles Acton denounced this practice by the AC and suggested that it encouraged event organisers to incur losses.⁵³⁷ MAI's tours or concerts were never run on a profit-making basis and the Association was completely dependent on the AC's guarantees-against-loss system. For example, the 1955 tour by the London String Quartet required the AC to guarantee a maximum of £235 against loss (£165 to cover losses on concerts, £50 for travel and £20 for internal MAI expenses);⁵³⁸ each venue paid the MAI £36.15.0 and had to furnish a detailed income and expenditure account. The accounts of each venue, with the exception of one, showed considerable losses, despite being subsidised; this suggests that concerts were either not well attended due to disinterest or cost of the tickets was prohibitive.

5.9 Handel Festival (1959)

The next large-scale event organised by Olive Smith was the bi-centenary celebrations of Handel's death in 1959 (see Appendix I).⁵³⁹ It featured a series of five oratorio concerts in Dublin, Cork and Galway⁵⁴⁰ (as well as two schools concerts) by the all-female Douglas Cameron String Orchestra, led by Sylvia Cleaver, soloists and local choirs (see fig. 20).⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁷ Charles Acton, "The Arts and the Arts Council," *Éire-Ireland* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 98.

⁵³⁸ Letter from William O'Sullivan, AC secretary (45 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin) to Olive Smith on 29 April, 1955, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 14. The AC's practice of guaranteeing against loss for MAI concerts continued for many years, and the MAI could not have staged its concerts or tours without this assistance. For example, in 1972, the New Irish Wind Ensemble consisting of Helmut Seeber and Lindsay Armstrong (oboes), Brian O'Rourke and Sidney Egan (clarinets), Gilbert Berg and Dieter Prodohl (bassoons), Victor Malirsh and Thomas Briggs (horns), performed at seven venues (Gorey, Clonakilty, Kilkenny, Ballina, Portlaoise, Athlone and Tullamore). The total received from the venues was £225, fees paid to artists totalled £945 and miscellaneous expenses were £10. The AC made up the substantial shortfall of £700 on this tour. IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15.

⁵³⁹ The Festival was funded by the AC, the Shaw Fund and the Irish-German Society and ran at a loss of £100.2.8. IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 42. (see Appendix J).

⁵⁴⁰ The concert in Galway was a remarkable event in that it was the first performance of the *Messiah* in Galway; Acton was very complimentary of the Franciscan Choral Society's performance, exclaiming that "clearly, Galway has a very bright choral future." "Messiah" Performed in Galway," *The Irish Times*, 10 October, 1959.

⁵⁴¹ In organising these regional concerts, which often included performances at schools, the MAI was carrying out what would become arts education policy with the enactment of Ireland's second Arts Act in 1973 (see Chapter 6).

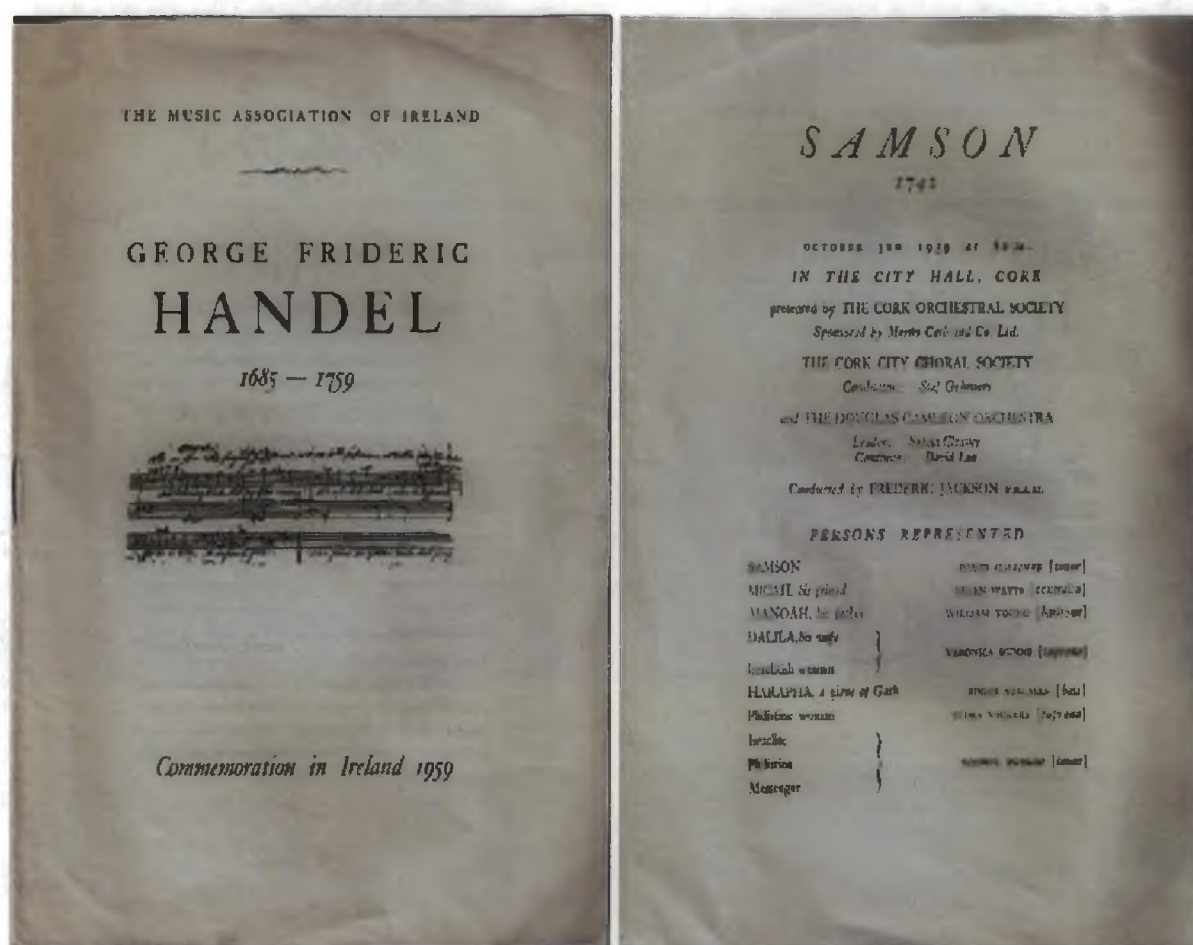


Figure 20. Handel Festival: general programme (1959).

To launch the Festival, the MAI, in association with the Irish-German Society, organised a concert at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin on 28 September, 1959, and this was followed on 30 September, by Brian Boydell's lecture, 'Handel in Dublin'.⁵⁴² From 5 to 17 October, an exhibition of Handel manuscripts, relics, musical instruments and photographs ran at the Civic Museum, South William Street, Dublin; it was opened by Dr J.S. Hall, chairman of the Deal and Walmer Handelian Society, UK.⁵⁴³ Hall, in association with the MAI, unveiled a plaque at Fishamble Street, Dublin, to commemorate the first performance of the *Messiah* on 13 April, 1742. He thanked Smith, in particular, for administering the appeal for funds and undertaking the arrangements for the erection of the plaque.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴² At this lecture, Boydell discussed music in Dublin in the eighteenth-century, Handel's visit to Ireland and three oratorios, *Samson*, *Soloman* and *Jephthah*.

⁵⁴³ "Handel Festival, 1959," *The Irish Times*, 25 June, 1959.

⁵⁴⁴ Letter from Dr. J.S. Hall to Olive Smith, 17 October, 1959, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7.

Olive Smith not only played a crucial role in organising the Festival but she also contributed to its performance in her role as chorus master of the Culwick Choral Society. At the Dublin performance of *Samson*, on 5 October, 1959, Charles Acton complimented the Culwick Choral Society for its “strengthening of soloists” and, in particular, he paid tribute to Olive Smith.⁵⁴⁵ However, Acton was not pleased with the MAI Council for seating him “where the men of the choir and the bass line of the orchestra overshadowed all else.”⁵⁴⁶ Acton praised the performances of Roger Stalman and Helen Watts but commented that, if Veronica Dunne wished to sing in the style of a dramatic Handel soprano, she would have to “restrain her volume above the stave.”⁵⁴⁷ He left his most caustic attack for the conductor, Frederic Jackson, whom he described as “inadequate as far as the orchestra were concerned” and he also had a tendency “to hustle his soloists.”⁵⁴⁸ Acton continued his condemnation of Jackson in his review of the *Messiah* in Galway on 8 October, 1959, on this occasion questioning why the MAI had to “import a foreign conductor”.⁵⁴⁹ He stated that “added to the defects that he revealed on Monday in “Samson” was a lack of any consistency of style. There are several possible ways of treating Handel, but a hotch-potch of Victorianism and *baroquerie* is impossible.”⁵⁵⁰ Considering that the MAI had repeatedly complained about RÉ hiring foreign conductors and musicians, its appointment of an English conductor was an interesting and hypocritical undertaking. Acton, as a life-long member of the MAI, would have been aware of the MAI’s stance in this regard. Perhaps, he was seizing the opportunity to highlight a prevalent practice of relying on “imported artists.”⁵⁵¹

5.10 ‘Coming Out’ or Début Recitals (1957)

A.J. Potter, MAI member and composer, was the first to suggest that the Association sponsor a number of recitals by young Irish musicians endeavouring to establish a reputation. The suggestion was enthusiastically welcomed and MAI’s ‘Coming Out’ concerts proved to be popular, as evidenced by newspaper reviews of the time. An *Irish Independent* journalist praised the MAI for coming to the aid of young musicians who otherwise had to personally

⁵⁴⁵ “Handel’s “Samson” performed in Dublin,” *The Irish Times*, 6 October, 1959.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ “Messiah” Performed in Galway,” *The Irish Times*, 10 October, 1959.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

“undertake the cost and responsibility” of their first, public recitals.⁵⁵² In 1957, the first of a series of ‘Coming-Out’ recitals took place at the Royal Hibernian Hotel, Dublin. The Wigmore Hall’s Artists’ First Series in London, which provided a platform for gifted young British musicians, was used as a model for the MAI’s recital series. Prospective performers were not required to audition but were encouraged to apply to a special sub-committee (set up in 1960), who in turn, made recommendations to the MAI Council. Once a suitable artist was selected, the MAI booked a venue and advertised the recital. The young musicians did not receive payment for their recitals but the Association covered all expenses incurred, including hire of venue, accompanists’ fees, printing of tickets and programmes, and hire of instruments as necessary.⁵⁵³

The first young musician to take part in the ‘Coming-Out’ series was violinist, Mary O’Brien, on 15 January, 1957.⁵⁵⁴ The concept of the recitals was warmly welcomed in all quarters but O’Brien’s performance received mixed reviews. Her programme consisted of:

<i>La Folia</i>	Corelli/Leonard
Sonate No. 3	Eugène Ysaye
Sonata No. 3 in D min, Op. 108	Johannes Brahms
Caprice No. 20	Paganini/Kreisler
<i>Chant de Roxane</i>	Karol Szymanowski
Farandole from <i>Danceries</i>	Claude Delvincourt
<i>Tzigane</i>	Maurice Ravel

A critique of the recital in *The Irish Times* noted that

... one of the difficulties involved in organising concerts by immature (if promising) musicians is that many of the works one wishes to hear are obviously outside their interpretative range; on the other hand, many works which are interesting and useful to the performer are musically null. A compromise must be achieved. It would be pleasant but untrue to say such a compromise was reached in the programme last night ... A more urgent necessity on Miss O’Brien’s part will be to clear up a certain turgid quality, particularly in her playing in the lower strings.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵² *Irish Independent*, 12 January, 1957, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 14.

⁵⁵³ IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 14.

⁵⁵⁴ Mary O’Brien was accompanied by Kitty O’Callaghan and admission to the concert was 5/- and 2/6. Concert Programme, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 14.

⁵⁵⁵ “Violin and Piano Recital,” *The Irish Times*, 16 January, 1957.

The *Evening Press* commented more generally on the concert, praising the MAI for its initiative and, in particular, the work of Olive Smith.

Great bunches of flowers covered the table in the hall of the Hibernian, and inside in the lounge, three hundred and fifty Dubliners ... the core of the musical world here...waited to throng the ball-room for the “coming-out” of Mary O’Brien ... Her introduction here is due to the Music Association of Ireland ... a kind of musical “pressure group,” now four hundred strong ... with the unique services of the accomplished Mrs. Lyall Smith as Treasurer.⁵⁵⁶

The article continued by questioning if the MAI could organise similar concerts every month, but suggested that a “benevolently amateur” organisation could unfortunately not accomplish such a task, adding that such an undertaking would interfere with the essence of the voluntary MAI.⁵⁵⁷ It is heartening to note that the newspaper articles, discussing the MAI’s first ‘Coming Out’ recital, were supportive and complimentary of the initiative and of the MAI generally; this suggests that it was well regarded in Dublin at this time. One journalist commented that the MAI’s series inspired the organisers of the Wexford Festival to include concerts for young musicians in their programming and stated that the MAI had “already met with success not only in relation to the Wexford Festival but in the capital city, and its example could be profitably followed in relation to the other arts: to the plastic arts and to literature.”⁵⁵⁸

For many years P.J. Carrolls, Dundalk (the well-known cigarette manufacturing company) sponsored the ‘Coming Out’ recitals, presenting some recitals in association with the MAI and others under their own aegis. Carrolls, however, did not charge an admission fee whereas the MAI did occasionally. In an interview with Eoin Garrett in 1983, Michael Dervan criticised this lack of consistency, he questioned the suitability of certain venues, highlighted problems with advertising and publicity and accused the MAI of “making a desperate last ditch bid for attention” in arranging these recitals.⁵⁵⁹ By the 1980s, the music scene in Ireland had changed considerably since the early years of the ‘Coming Out’ recitals. There were more opportunities to perform, more venues available to up-and-coming musicians and more opportunities to avail of funding from the AC. In effect, the MAI

⁵⁵⁶ *Evening Press*, 16 January, 1957, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 14.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁸ *Irish Press*, 9 November 1957, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 14.

⁵⁵⁹ Michael Dervan, “Launching Pad,” *Sound Post* 12 (February/March), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 12.

'Coming Out' recitals had achieved their objective and were, one could argue, no longer necessary by the mid 1980s.⁵⁶⁰

A glance through the list of recitals between 1957 and 1982 in Appendix K highlights the calibre of many of the musicians who performed at these recitals. Musicians/singers such as Bernadette Greevy, Brigid Mooney, Anne Woodworth, Thérèse Timoney, Brenda Hurley and Malcolm Proud used this platform to launch their careers. The MAI Archive contains many letters of appreciation from musicians who took part in this scheme; Bernadette Greevy (1960), Gerard Gillen (1964), John O'Connor (1967), Thérèse Timoney (1971) and Peter Sweeney (1973) were generous in their praise of the support and encouragement which they had received from the MAI and, in particular, from Olive Smith. John O'Connor had fond memories of his 'Coming-Out' recital in 1968 and asserted that the series "set standards of achievement to which all students" of his era aspired.⁵⁶¹ He also commented on the advantage of not having to publicise the concert or sell tickets which allowed him "to concentrate fully on the performance of the recital knowing that its organisation was in such capable hands."⁵⁶² It appears from correspondence in the Archive that Smith was an influential figure in the practical running of the series and also devoted her energies to the encouragement of young singers and instrumentalists. She saw particular promise in a young singer named Bernadette Greevy who gave her 'Coming Out' recital in 1960. Bernadette Greevy spoke fondly of her 'Coming Out' recital and remembered the assistance she received from Olive Smith.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to the Music Association of Ireland in the person of Olive Smith, who organised my coming-out recital in Dublin, and later had a huge input into my London début at Wigmore Hall. This meant that I was launched as a fully professional singer on the international stage at a very early age.⁵⁶³

Olive Smith remained an active committee member of the 'Coming Out' recitals series until her retirement in 1975. From the early 1970s, she played an increasingly peripheral role in the organisation of these recitals and, in 1978, a new committee was appointed with Thérèse Timoney assuming the role of secretary of the 'Coming Out' series. Smith's involvement in two other major projects, particularly close to her heart, namely the

⁵⁶⁰ The promotion of young musicians is continued by the Feis Ceoil's Spotlight on Youth Series and Music Network's Musicwide programme.

⁵⁶¹ MAI, *MAI 50th Anniversary Celebration Programme*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40, 6.

⁵⁶² Letter from John O'Connor to Olive Smith on 9 December, 1968, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 26.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*

Schools Recitals Scheme (1967) and the Irish Youth Orchestra (1970), consumed a considerable amount of her time and energy in the early years of their existence.

5.11 Schools' Recitals Scheme, Ógra Ceoil and the Irish Youth Orchestra (IYO)

Christopher Small's definition of music as being "not a thing at all, but an activity, something people do" comes to mind when considering the last, and most enduring phase of Olive Smith's contribution to music education in Ireland.⁵⁶⁴ This saw the flowering of Smith's finest achievements in the promotion of access to, and participation in, music by young people. A number of factors facilitated the success of these initiatives from the 1960s onwards and merit attention here, namely, educational reform under the principles of "access, availability, exposure and opportunity",⁵⁶⁵ and a gradual shift from the purely educational value of the arts to the contribution which they could make to the economy. These realisations led to increased governmental support of the arts and, as a result, the MAI benefitted greatly from AC's enlarged arts policies and funding from the 1970s onwards.

The merits and de-merits of traditional educational methods and the inclusion of music education as a curriculum subject have been debated by educationalists and others down through the ages. However, it was not until the late 1960s and 1970s that expansion in general music education occurred. With 50% of the population under 25 years in 1966, youth participation in community and cultural activities was gaining awareness and popularity.⁵⁶⁶ The MAI wished to make classical music (at a practical and appreciative level) available to all young people in Ireland and Association member, Joseph Grocock echoed this when he noted that music was

... not something that must be jealously guarded for the few specially chosen children who are fortunate enough to have private "music lessons": it should be within reach of all, except the very small proportion of children who are completely tone-deaf. Musical experience comes from two sources: taking an active part in music-making, and listening to music. One is complementary to the other: neither is completely satisfying in itself. Music, as a subject in education, must include both kinds of musical experience, performing and listening. Nor should there be a division of the children (as occurs in some schools) into those who perform and those who listen; all

⁵⁶⁴ Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Conneticut: Wesleyan University Press), 2.

⁵⁶⁵ In 1967, the introduction of free education at secondary level by Donagh O'Malley, Minister for Education, had a profound affect on Irish society and culture. O'Malley's desire to place art and music firmly in the education system paved the way for reforms in arts policy in the 1970s. O' Sullivan, *Cultural Politics and Irish Education since the 1950s: Policy Paradigms and Power*, 247.

⁵⁶⁶ Census figures obtained from <http://www.cso.ie> (accessed on 20 April, 2010).

children (with the exception of the tone-deaf) should be encouraged to participate in both kinds of musical activity.⁵⁶⁷

The MAI's establishment of the Schools' Recitals Scheme (SRS) and Ógra Ceoil in 1967 marked a significant step in bringing music to a wider youth audience; the Association approached the Gulbenkian Foundation in early 1967 for funding of both schemes. It was envisaged that the SRS would provide regular concerts in schools throughout the country and Ógra Ceoil, the Irish equivalent of *Jeunesses Musicales*,⁵⁶⁸ would encourage young people to attend concerts at reduced rates. Two pilot schemes were organised and, in April 1967, Smith submitted the MAI's *Proposed Scheme for Recitals and Foundation of Ógra Ceoil (Youth and Music)* to the Gulbenkian Foundation.⁵⁶⁹ In the proposal, Smith outlined the objectives of the schemes.

Our idea is to bring live music regularly into the schools in an effort to give young people the chance to acquire the desire to listen to and enjoy music and also to arouse their interest in making music themselves. It is proposed to begin with secondary and vocational schools in provincial towns where at present there is virtually no opportunity at all for listening to live music ... During their school years the majority of our young people (especially the boys) have had no experience of music. As a result the idea of going to a concert or to the opera has never occurred to them. Ógra Ceoil will encourage students and groups of young people in factories, offices and shops etc. (between the ages of about 15 and 25) to attend concerts, opera and recitals.⁵⁷⁰

By July 1967, the Gulbenkian Foundation guaranteed funding of £6,000 over three years to launch the joint-scheme on condition that the DoE continued to fund it after the three-year funding was finished. The Minister of Education subsequently authorised a grant-in-aid of £2,000 in the fourth year of the scheme (see Appendix L).⁵⁷¹

The precedent for engaging professional musicians and musical ensembles to perform in schools throughout the country was established as early as 1932. Marie McCarthy

⁵⁶⁷ Grocock, *A General Survey of Music in the Republic of Ireland*, 9-10.

⁵⁶⁸ *Jeunesses Musicales* International was established in Brussels in 1945 and is the largest youth music NGO (national government organisation). Its primary objective was "to enable young people to develop through music across all boundaries". For an account of JMI see <http://jmi.net> (accessed 12 May, 2010).

⁵⁶⁹ MAI, 1967 MAI Annual Report, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34, 5.

⁵⁷⁰ *Proposed Scheme for Recitals in Schools and Foundation of Ógra Ceoil* (no date), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7, 2.

⁵⁷¹ MAI, 1967 MAI Annual Report, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34, 5.

describes occasions when the Army Band, under the direction of Colonel Fritz Brase,⁵⁷² performed at national schools throughout Dublin during the 1930s.⁵⁷³ In the 1950s, Ceol Chumann na n-Óg organised orchestral concerts for primary, secondary and vocational school students. The MAI had, in fact, investigated this area as early as 1951 when it contacted the Rural Music Schools Association, London about its workings.⁵⁷⁴ By early 1952, MAI had prepared a document entitled, *Proposal: A Panel of Recitalists and Lecturers*.⁵⁷⁵ It was envisaged schools would pay a flat rate of two guineas per recital/lecture, which the MAI would pay directly to the artist.⁵⁷⁶ However, the concept does not appear to have developed, and, on 10 January, 1952, MAI offered its assistance to the Schools' Concerts Association, Dún Laoghaire and acknowledged its shared interests.

The MAI has had this very important question very much in their minds and had intended to get some Scheme going in the near future, however it seems much better that the organisation of school concerts should come from the schools' teachers themselves.⁵⁷⁷

Over a decade later, the idea of live school performances would re-emerge; however, this time, the genesis of the SRS originated with Smith's daughter, Gillian. She and her husband, Lindsay Armstrong, contacted a number of boarding schools in 1966 with a view to arranging engagements for their oboe/piano duet. The success of their performances at various schools prompted Olive Smith to investigate further the possibility of adapting and developing this model so that instrumentalists and singers might be engaged to perform in schools throughout the country.⁵⁷⁸ Recitals of 35 to 40 minutes at three different schools per day were envisaged and artists would receive a fee of £12 per recital, of which £5 to £7 would be contributed by each participating school.⁵⁷⁹ Appendix M shows the number of SRS recitals/workshops undertaken between 1968 and 1984.

The SRS engaged many leading contemporary Irish instrumentalists and singers to perform at schools throughout the country, e.g. John O'Connor, Veronica McSwiney, Anthony

⁵⁷² Colonel Wilhelm Fritz Brase (1875-1840), German conductor and conductor of the Army No. 1 Band and the Defence Forces School of Music.

⁵⁷³ McCarthy, *Passing It On*, 123.

⁵⁷⁴ Copy of letter sent by MAI to Christopher Fleming of Rural Music Schools Association, 106 Gloucester Place, London on 5 July, 1951, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 26.

⁵⁷⁵ Letter sent by Edgar Deale to Farrington on 3 January, 1951, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 26.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Copy of letter from Gillian Smith to James Blanc, School Concerts Association, 1 Mulgrave Terrace, Dún Laoghaire, Dublin on 10 January, 1952, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 26.

⁵⁷⁸ Gillian Smith, interview by author, Dublin, 29 March, 2010.

⁵⁷⁹ *Proposed Scheme for Recitals in Schools and Foundation of Ógra Ceoil*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7, 2.

Byrne, Ellen Cranitch, Gráinne Yeats, Gillian Smith, Alan Smale and many others, some of whom had participated in the MAI's 'Coming Out' recitals, performed as part of the SRS. The Scheme, which commenced in 1967 and continued until 2004, did not always run smoothly and strikes, budget cuts, a lack of suitable school halls and a dearth of suitable pianos often hindered performances. The DoE and AC grants fluctuated over the years and occasionally funds were received from the Ireland Funds.⁵⁸⁰ The significant costs incurred in the running of the SRS, including the employment of a full-time secretary, meant that this branch of the MAI's activities experienced regular financial difficulties. There were also problems of overspending in artists' fees and expenses (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6). SRS was run jointly with Ógra Ceoil, both sharing the services of one full-time secretary. Membership of Ógra Ceoil totalled 800 in its first year and was modelled on a successful project initiated by the Mayer Foundation in London which sold left-over tickets at reduced rates to members.⁵⁸¹

Building an educated young musical audience was a primary objective of organisations such as Ógra Ceoil, but many groups and individuals who patronised the arts believed that, in addition to assuming the role of enthusiastic audiences, young people would also benefit from performing in amateur ensembles. In this pursuit, from 1958 to 1968, the Dorothy Mayer Foundation donated £7,000 to purchase instruments for schools and to establish small school orchestras. This initiative was enthusiastically welcomed and a basic musical infrastructure for amateur orchestras, at primary and second level, was established.⁵⁸² The Irish Youth Orchestra (IYO), which was also funded by the Mayer Foundation, initially drew many of its members from these newly-established school orchestras.⁵⁸³

⁵⁸⁰ The Ireland Funds (1976) is a philanthropic organisation which sponsors cultural, educational and social projects in Ireland and abroad. For further information on the Ireland Funds see <http://theirelandfunds.org> (accessed 4 April, 2011).

⁵⁸¹ During 1968 nearly 1500 tickets at reduced rates were made available to Ógra Ceoil members for symphony, operatic, chamber music concerts and recitals and ballet. P.J. Carroll & Co Ltd., Cement Ltd., Arthur Guinness Son & Co. (Dublin) Ltd., John Jameson & Son Ltd., McMullan Bros. Ltd., and Players and Wills (Ireland) Ltd. were among the firms who subsidised the cost of these tickets. MAI, *1968 MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34, 5. In 1969, membership of Ógra Ceoil dropped to 220. From 1970, it is clear the provision of an orchestra became Ógra Ceoil's priority and with the launch of the IYO in January 1972, Ógra Ceoil's membership went into serious decline. By 1973, there were only 70 members and in 1974 it was "decided to let this particular aspect of Ógra Ceoil lapse, temporarily – reviving it if the demand recurred." MAI, *Minutes of Meeting on 20 March, 1974*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 43. This also coincided with the IYO's first tour abroad, to Germany.

⁵⁸² James Blanc, "Lady Mayer: An Appreciation," *Counterpoint* (May 1974), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 16.

⁵⁸³ NYO, *1970 NYO Application Form*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 24.

The IYO was the brainchild of Olive Smith and she regarded its success as her most significant achievement. After the death of her husband in 1969, Smith travelled to her cottage in Connemara, Co. Galway; following a period of reflection and respite, she rang her daughter and informed her that she planned to establish a youth orchestra.⁵⁸⁴ Application forms for membership of the Orchestra were initially only sent to schools of music or secondary schools with orchestras.⁵⁸⁵ In July 1970, Smith, through Ógra Ceoil, organised the first summer residential course for musicians aged between 14 and 20 years at Our Lady's School, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow.⁵⁸⁶ She appointed Hugh Maguire as conductor and musical director and he guided sixty-three musicians from all over Ireland through the intricacies of works such as *Carnival Romain* (Berlioz), *Karelia Suite* (Sibelius) and Symphony No. 1 (Shostakovich).⁵⁸⁷

The formation of the IYO was, undoubtedly, influenced by the visit of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain to Cork and Dublin in April, 1958.⁵⁸⁸ This trip, at the invitation of the MAI, made a lasting impression on Olive Smith and many others throughout the country.⁵⁸⁹ Smith had “persevered for many years to persuade” Ruth Railton, founder/director of the orchestra, to visit Ireland and hold its first residential course outside the UK. In her memoirs, Railton stated that “Mrs Smith wanted the best musical training for Ireland, and hoped to learn more of our methods” and “copy the idea for her own country.”⁵⁹⁰ The visit also proved inspirational for Corkonians at the time; Michael O’Callaghan founded

⁵⁸⁴ Gillian Smith, interview by author, Dublin, 29 March, 2010.

⁵⁸⁵ NYO, 1970 NYO Application Form, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 24. Joseph Grocock (member of the first MAI Council) was the organiser of the Orchestra and the course fee was £10.

⁵⁸⁶ The first course ran from 17 to 24 July 1970 and its tutors included Aisling Drury-Byrne, Thérèse Timoney, Gilbert Berg, Charlie Maguire, Victor Malirsh and Bruno Schrecker. The organising committee consisted of Olive Smith (chair), Mary Timoney and Helen Watson (administrators), John O’Conor (librarian) and Anthony Lewis Crosby (orchestra manager). IYO, 1970 Irish Youth Orchestra Programme, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 24.

⁵⁸⁷ Olive Smith knew Hugh Maguire as he was violinist with the Allegri Quartet which took part in an MAI Country/Corporate Tour in 1964.

⁵⁸⁸ The National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain comprised of 140 members aged between 13 and 19 years with two members from Northern Ireland and three from the Republic, one of whom was Smith’s daughter, Gillian. Lord Mayor of Dublin J. Carroll, TD held a reception for the Orchestra at the Mansion House on 9 April and later that day they enjoyed a visit to the Zoological Gardens, Dublin. The Orchestra held its residential course at the Metropole Hotel, Cork and performed at City Hall, Cork on 18 April and at the Theatre Royal, Dublin on 19 April at 3pm. The concert in Cork was sold out and an informal children’s concert/open rehearsal was held that morning. However, the concert in Dublin was not well attended. Ruth Railton, *Daring to Excel: The Story of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1992), 273-274.

⁵⁸⁹ The Orchestra was conducted by Jean Martinon and the soloist was Sydney Mann (violin). Its programme included *Oberon Overture* by Carl Maria Von Weber, Symphony No. 2 in B minor by Alexander Borodin, 1st movement of Violin Concerto No. 5 in A major by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Scherzo from *An Irish Symphony* by Herbert Hamilton Harty and *Capriccio Espagnole* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Ibid. 279.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 272.

the Cork Youth Orchestra after the visit and Ita Beausang claimed that in 1958 the orchestra's "high standard seemed unattainable by young Irish players".⁵⁹¹ Critics praised the British Youth Orchestra stating that "this was no amateur concert" but a "most enjoyable and satisfying" performance.⁵⁹² Acton commented on the "tremendous vitality and enthusiasm" of the orchestra and pointed out that boys comprised two-thirds of the orchestra and lead all sections. Railton described this fact as "a timely knock at the boys-play-football-and-girls-play-the-piano tradition."⁵⁹³ Another surprising revelation made by Railton in her autobiography, is the "virulent opposition from the Music Teachers' Association and the Schools Music Association" and others she met along the way and, in many respects, this echoed the challenges faced by Smith and the MAI.⁵⁹⁴ Nevertheless, these obstacles incited individuals like Railton and Smith, and solidified their determination to accomplish their goals.

The commitment of the IYO's directors to music education for all was manifested through its scholarship scheme which was supported by the DoE, IBM (Ireland) Ltd., Carnegie Trust and private donations. This funding was also utilised to finance the purchase of instruments for the Orchestra and to assist a number of students with their tuition fees.⁵⁹⁵ On 7 March, 1979, Tim Mahony, chairman of Toyota (Ireland) Ltd., presented a cheque for £6,200 to the IYO. This generous sponsorship enabled the IYO to organise an extra course (17-20 April, 1979) at Wesley College, Dublin, which culminated in a concert on 20 April at St. Francis Xavier Hall, Dublin (see fig. 21).⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹¹ Ita Beausang, "Changes in Music Education in Ireland: Part 1," *The Journal of Music* (May/June 2002) <http://journalofmusic.com/focus/changes-music-education-ireland-part-1> (accessed 3 June, 2011).

⁵⁹² "Magnificent Playing by Youth Orchestra," *Irish Independent*, 20 April, 1958.

⁵⁹³ Railton, *Daring to Excel*, 283.

⁵⁹⁴ "Dame Ruth King," *Telegraph*, 28 February, 2001.

⁵⁹⁵ In 1973 the Scholarship Scheme was expanded through private donations and RTE recording fees, enabling the IYO to purchase a second bassoon, oboe and clarinet. MAI, 1973 *MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34, 9.

⁵⁹⁶ *Irish Independent*, 19 April, 1979, 10.



Figure 21. Tim Mahony (chairman, Toyota), Hugh Maguire (IYO conductor) and Olive Smith (IYO chairman).⁵⁹⁷

Toyota's funding of the IYO continued the following year, enabling the establishment of a Junior Orchestra to further accommodate the large number of applications for places on the IYO course. The Junior Orchestra's first course was held at Glenstal Abbey, Co. Limerick with Gearóid Grant as conductor and musical director and David Agnew as manager.⁵⁹⁸ To mark the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the IYO, a trip (by the senior orchestra) was organised to the International Festival of Youth Orchestras and Performing Arts in Aberdeen, August 1980. The Cultural Relations Committee contributed towards the cost of flights and Toyota gave a grant (in addition to their annual grant) towards accommodation and general expenses.

Smith was affectionately known as 'Granny Smith' by successive members of the Orchestra; her personal and professional commitment to its development over many years ensured its success. On her retirement as chairperson of the MAI in 1975, a collection amounting to almost £700 was presented to her and she insisted that it be spent on percussion instruments for the Orchestra.⁵⁹⁹ She commented that it "was a particularly happy inspiration of Council to decide that the presentation should take the form of a gift to the Irish Youth Orchestra of very valuable instruments for the percussion section (long desired but hitherto

⁵⁹⁷ Eoin Garrett, "MAI News," *Counterpoint* (April 1979), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 3.

⁵⁹⁸ 94 young musicians attended the first course and a large number of the orchestra's staff were past IYO members (a practice which has been retained to the present day). MAI, *1980 Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 34, 6.

⁵⁹⁹ MAI Council members presented Olive Smith with a topaz and pearl brooch. MAI, Minutes of MAI Annual General Meeting on 24 November, 1976. IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 38.

unattainable).”⁶⁰⁰ The National Youth Orchestra of Ireland, as it is now known, currently has ninety-two members aged between twelve and eighteen years and is regarded as one of the finest youth orchestras in Europe. Declan Townsend of the *Irish Examiner* described the Orchestra as one of Ireland’s “most valuable national treasures. Unlike the treasures in museums, though, this asset is constantly changing, constantly growing, constantly improving.”⁶⁰¹

5.12 Conclusions

When I first contacted Olive Smith’s daughter, Gillian, I asked her what words would best describe her mother. She replied

... my mother was a music organiser of extraordinary ability, a campaigner, a visionary, a choral conductor, a supporter of young people, a very musical and cultured woman, highly intelligent and possessing boundless energy.⁶⁰²

One could be forgiven for regarding a daughter as being biased in assessing a mother’s achievements. However, having assessed Smith’s contribution to musical life in Ireland, who could disagree with her assessment? Smith was a visionary whose dogged resilience and determination assured the realisation of her vision, except in the campaign for a national concert hall, where her steadfast insistence on a new build prolonged the campaign and hindered the achievement of her objective. She made no personal gain from her artistic enterprises; her only wish was to assist young aspiring musicians and to make music accessible to all.

Olive Smith, in her various volunteer roles in the MAI, made a considerable difference to music education in Ireland. Though not a pedagogue, composer or professional musician, her efforts, more than any other member of the MAI, helped realise its objectives, leaving a lasting impression on the cultural life of Ireland. In Olive Smith’s obituary, her close friend and colleague, Edgar M. Deale, eloquently articulated her considerable achievements.

Olive was a generous and selfless giver. When the idea of the Music Association of Ireland was conceived as a greatly-needed organisation which would touch all aspects of classical music in our country, she it was who largely shouldered the

⁶⁰⁰ Pat O’Kelly, “Assignment in Athlone,” *Counterpoint* (September 1976), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 11.

⁶⁰¹ <http://www.nvoi.ie/about/contact/> (accessed 18 September, 2010).

⁶⁰² Gillian Smith, interview by author, Dublin, 29 March, 2010.

burden of making such an ambitious project work ... I recall with pleasure Olive's enormous enthusiasm and devotion to duty. And her self-effacement – foremost in action, and the last to claim credit. She was gifted with remarkable capacity.⁶⁰³

However, when such a remarkable committee member retires or reduces her input, the future of an organisation can be severely affected; in the case of the MAI, it was impossible to replace Smith's drive, multi-faceted skills and, most importantly, her spirit of volunteerism.

It is remarkable that her most enduring and important contribution, the IYO, and the manner in which it was able to attract funding from both state and independent agencies, could not have been replicated in other MAI activities. This was, in many respects, an ideal administrative model and, at a time during the 1980s when state finances were contracting, it might have been less easy to withdraw AC funding from other MAI activities were it matched from contributions by independent sources.

Smith's initiatives, in particular, the SRS and IYO, thrived in a climate which embraced social inclusion⁶⁰⁴ and shared ownership,⁶⁰⁵ experienced pioneering developments in the arts and increased educational opportunities and leisure time. The period was marked by a gradual realisation by successive governments of the value and vital service of the arts to society similar to the other essential services such as "health, education and social welfare".⁶⁰⁶ Her lifelong dedication to music was acknowledged by TCD, who awarded her an honorary doctorate in Laws on 6 July, 1978. She was one of seven conferred with honorary degrees that day and was in the company of illustrious figures such as the Nobel and Lenin Peace prize winner, Seán MacBride.⁶⁰⁷ It was fitting for Smith, a former graduate and senior administrator at the Registrar's office at TCD, to receive an accolade for services to music. Smith passed away on 12 September, 1993, in Dublin having suffered from Alzheimer's disease.⁶⁰⁸ To honour the centenary of Smith's birth in 2006, the Olive Smith Chair was established for the leader of the NYOI Junior Orchestra.

⁶⁰³ "Dr. Olive Smith," *The Irish Times*, 15 October, 1993.

⁶⁰⁴ By social inclusion I refer to the incorporation of all members of society. For further information on social inclusion in Ireland see <http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/NAPinclusionReportPDF.pdf> (accessed 5 July, 2011).

⁶⁰⁵ By shared ownership I refer to the communal control of an object.

⁶⁰⁶ Marie Bourke, "Museum Learning Comes of Age in Ireland," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 91, no. 363 (Autumn 2002): 239.

⁶⁰⁷ "Degree for T.C.D. for Sean MacBride," *Irish Independent*, 5 July, 1978.

⁶⁰⁸ Gillian Smith, interview with author, Dublin, 29 March, 2010.

Today, Olive Smith's guiding hand is evident in many musical initiatives in Ireland. Her commitment to music education and her determination to deliver educational reform in music will resonate for many generations to come. Olive Smith, Ruth Railton and Lady Dorothy Mayer,⁶⁰⁹ all formidable, creative women, fought tirelessly to improve the standing of classical music during their lifetimes. Railton and Mayer have been acknowledged for their labours; hopefully, this chapter will, at last, firmly position Olive Smith as one of the leading music education entrepreneurs and visionaries in Ireland.

⁶⁰⁹ Blanc, "Lady Mayer: An Appreciation," *Counterpoint* (May, 1974), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 16.

Chapter 6

From Voluntary to Professional: The MAI and the Arts in Ireland (1973-1990)

6.1 Introduction:

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, and to enjoy the arts.⁶¹⁰

Though the notion of access to the arts for all is enshrined in various UN treaties, some countries have been slow to actively support and legislate for the arts. In Ireland during the early 1970s, two significant interventions occurred which had important implications in realising the requirements of article 27, namely a shift from social to governmental responsibility for the arts and improvements in arts education aimed at providing easier access to the arts for all. The first of these was largely administered by the AC and the second was due to curriculum reforms.⁶¹¹ Interestingly, though the position and funding of the arts improved during the 1970s, Ireland's economy was not so fortunate. Fianna Fáil's Government budget of 1977 resulted in the abolition of significant revenue generating taxes, such as motor taxation and domestic rates. This budgetary stance, coupled with civil and political unrest in Northern Ireland and Ireland's overvalued currency, resulted in one of the bleakest periods in modern Ireland's history.⁶¹²

In the midst of this bleak climate, the traditionally-perceived non-educational benefits of the arts were replaced by a realisation of the significant contribution the arts (and education) could make to improving the economy of the country.⁶¹³ This slow, but gradual, realisation of the value of the arts to Irish society, particularly to education and via education to the economy, was acknowledged through various initiatives, principally the development of national arts structures. The re-structuring of the AC in 1973 and, significantly, the introduction of the second Arts Act (1973) contributed to the creation of a positive arts climate in Ireland. In 1975, the appointment of the AC's first full-time Director, Colm Ó Briain, the publication of the *Provision for the Arts*

⁶¹⁰ United Nations, Article 27, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). <http://udhr.org?UDHR/default.htm> (accessed 10 January, 2011).

⁶¹¹ O'Sullivan, *Cultural Politics and Irish Education since the 1950s*, 247.

⁶¹² The 1970s experienced two oil crises (1973 and 1979), inflation rates of 8.6% in 1972 rising to 21% in 1974, rising unemployment (7.9% in 1973 to 12.5% in 1977) and high levels of emigration.

⁶¹³ It was at this time that we had the first analyses of the numbers employed in the Irish music industry and a quantified assessment of the value of our music exports.

(1976) and *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education* (1979) provided further evidence of this positive shift in attitude towards increased arts activity and the professionalisation of the sector. Resulting from this sanguinity, the AC encouraged and enabled the MAI to employ its first full-time Music Organiser, P.J. Power,⁶¹⁴ in September, 1978. In so doing, the AC hoped the appointment would be

... the first step towards providing a full range of professional services to concert promoting groups, which will hopefully result in larger audiences and greater co-ordination of events between the various music clubs and societies.⁶¹⁵

This was a clear signal of the AC's support of the MAI at the end of the 1970s. Further, in its Annual Reports of 1978 and 1979, the AC praised the role of the MAI in the musical life of Ireland and acknowledged the dedication and commitment of volunteers and amateur organisations to classical music. It recognised the over-reliance on volunteer organisations, admitting that there

... is a danger that this voluntary commitment will be taken for granted when it comes to assessing what realistic financial provision is necessary for concerts and recitals throughout the country. In particular, a greater degree of fulltime professional administration is required if the burden on voluntary workers is to be eased.⁶¹⁶

Accordingly, the professionalisation of arts organisations became a key objective of the AC from the end of the 1970s and, although the MAI was well positioned to benefit from this, it failed to take advantage because it regarded its structures as sufficiently successful over the years and perceived no good reason to change. It is ironic that, over a period when the State was beginning to take seriously its obligations towards the arts, the MAI remained stoically trapped in an earlier reality when it was the most important voluntary administrative and organising association for music. It was because of this that the MAI found it difficult to reconcile professionalisation and volunteerism; in particular, its failure to follow AC directives on re-structuring its voluntary Council resulted in the Association becoming embroiled in conflicts which ultimately resulted in

⁶¹⁴ P.J. Power, Festival organiser of Limerick Civic Week. Power's duties, as Music Organiser of the MAI, included liaising with local arts promoters, promoting new contacts, organising country tours and the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music.

⁶¹⁵ Arts Council, *1978 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1979), 23.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

funding cuts, as well as loss of influence and impact on music. This chapter endeavours to chart the development of arts policy in Ireland, the gradual demise of the MAI from its initial successful period in the 1970s to a bleak period resulting in the formation of Music Network (1986).

6.2 Arts Council policy and the MAI

The philosopher, Herbert Spencer, described the arts as “those miscellaneous activities which fill up the leisure part of life” which were “devoted to the gratification of the tastes and feelings and should therefore occupy the leisure part of education.”⁶¹⁷ While the first Arts Act (1951) established the AC,⁶¹⁸ the second Arts Act (1973) set a course away from the Victorian view of the arts. The AC was perceived as the driver that would deliver a modern arts administrative structure in Ireland and, under government directions, it embarked on a complete overhaul of the arts and a re-organisation of its administration. The enactment of the second Arts Act in 1973 revealed the government’s growing awareness and acknowledgement of its responsibility for the formulation of arts policy. The Act paved the way for expansion in the arts while also allowing for the involvement of local authorities in promoting the arts in regional areas.⁶¹⁹ The ‘new’ AC decided to improve its public image by publishing a quarterly press release, by participating in educational projects and by supporting individual artists.⁶²⁰ Its first full-time Director, Colm Ó Briain,⁶²¹ “shook the Council out of its complacency and gave it a new image.”⁶²² Ó Briain criticised previous members of the AC for their fondness of purchasing

⁶¹⁷ Herbert Spencer, *“Essays on Education and Kindred Subjects,”* (1861) Part 1: *On Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical*, ed. Charles W. Eliot (London: Dent, 1911), 14.

⁶¹⁸ The primary focus of the first Arts Act (1951) was on the visual arts.

⁶¹⁹ The Act also made provision for three committees, a committee concerned with painting, sculpture and architecture; a second committee for drama, literature and cinema, and a third committee dedicated solely to music, thus finally acknowledging the importance of all arts areas as well as the visual arts which had hitherto received special attention.

⁶²⁰ As part of its policy of assisting individual artists, the AC enlisted the MAI to administer music scholarships on its behalf (1973-1976).

⁶²¹ Colm Ó Briain, director of the AC (1975-1983), Policy Advisor to the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Michael D. Higgins (1993-1997) and current Director of the National College of Art, Dublin.

⁶²² Cited in Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 183. As part of expansion, four new positions were created at the AC in November 1975: Administrator (David McConnell), Visual Arts Officer (Paula McCarthy), Literature/Film Officer (David Collins) and Music Officer (Dinah Molloy). The Government’s grant-in-aid to the AC increased from £85,000 in 1972/73 to £200,000 in 1975 and to a staggering £990,000 in 1976 due to the AC’s taking over of responsibility from the Department of Finance in December 1975, of the Abbey Theatre, the Gate Theatre, the Irish Theatre Company, the Irish Ballet Company and the Dublin Theatre Festival. Despite this dramatic increase in

works by established artists rather than championing the cause of art for all and providing funding and facilities for young artists.⁶²³ The AC was criticised by arts practitioners, e.g. the artist, Michael Kane pressed for an overhaul of art education and a re-organisation of the Council which he felt was led by “bumbling” and incompetent “academics and bureaucrats, the scaredotty, the snotty and the sacrosanct”, none of whom represented the people of Ireland.⁶²⁴

From the end of the 1970s, the development of the vital role of arts appreciation in Irish education became an AC priority and it adopted a markedly different and defiant attitude in pursuit of this end. The first major step in this direction was an independent assessment of the arts in Ireland, compiled by James M. Richards⁶²⁵ and Millicent Bowerman,⁶²⁶ which resulted in the joint-publication with the Gulbenkian Foundation⁶²⁷ of the *Provision for the Arts* (1976). The Richards Report (as it is more commonly known) recommended that, as the AC was responsible “for the welfare of all the arts”, it “should be in a position to take action accordingly”⁶²⁸; secondly, it proposed that arts education, particularly in boys’ schools, should be developed and, lastly, the enjoyment derived from the arts should be emphasised above all else.

There were three primary outcomes of the Richards Report: firstly, arts activities outside Dublin were extended; secondly, liaison with regional development organisations was increased with a view to setting up new schemes; and, finally, programmes and bursaries for individual artists, writers and musicians were increased. These three important recommendations were already part of routine MAI activities e.g. its SRS and regional concerts were based outside Dublin at this time, it attracted individual and group membership (nationwide) and, since 1973, it administered bursaries in aid of promising young musicians. Another clear endorsement of the

funding, the Irish government’s support of the arts of 50p *per capita* still lagged behind other countries; 78p in Northern Ireland, 89p in England, 114p in Scotland and 141p in Wales. *Ibid.*, 189.

⁶²³ Under the directorship of Fr. Donal O’Sullivan the AC purchased nearly 800 works, mainly by established Irish artists between 1959 and 1969. Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 168.

⁶²⁴ In this quote Kane was referring to AC Director Fr. Donal O’Sullivan S.J., the Earl of Rosse and Sir Basil Goulding, two members of the Council and Mervyn Wall, Secretary. *Ibid.*, 170.

⁶²⁵ Sir James M. Richards (1907-1992), British architect and chairman of the Provision for the Arts.

⁶²⁶ Millicent Bowerman, director of the Provision for the Arts (1974-1975), former Deputy Director of the Greater London Arts Association and branch literary editor of the Gulbenkian Foundation, UK.

⁶²⁷ The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation was established in 1956 and assists cultural, educational and social initiatives. For further information on the Gulbenkian Foundation see <http://www.gulbenkian.org.uk/> (accessed 24 April, 2011).

⁶²⁸ Arts Council/The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, *Provision for the Arts*, ed. James M. Richards (Dublin: The Arts Council/The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1976), 93.

AC's satisfaction with the work of the MAI at this time was its handing over (from mid 1978) of the organising of the auditions for the European Community Youth Orchestra (ECYO).⁶²⁹ The Richards Report became the basis for the development of new arts policies and led to a demand for greater funding from government. While the AC was determined to set the Government agenda for the arts, one would have thought that the MAI was perfectly positioned to undertake an important role in music promotion and, in so doing, be rewarded for many years of dedicated, voluntary work throughout the country. One might also argue that the AC determined the MAI agenda. As we shall see, a predisposition by the MAI towards non-compliance gradually frustrated the AC and resulted in a lack of confidence in its ability to administer the growth of professional musical endeavour throughout the country.

6.3 *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education: The Benson Report (1979)*

The realisation of the economic and educational value of the arts marked a significant opportunity for the sector. From the 1960s, the correlation between education and economic growth, known as human capital theory⁶³⁰ influenced educational reform, especially in the areas of "access, availability, exposure and opportunity".⁶³¹ The notions of social inclusion and shared ownership were gaining broad appeal in the 1970s, and these notions, coupled with increased educational opportunities and leisure time, contributed to a gradual shift in attitude towards the arts. The period was marked by a realisation by successive governments of the value of the arts

⁶²⁹ The ECYO was founded in 1978 and the AC organised the auditions in the first year. The orchestra visited Ireland in 1978, a tour which was funded by Allied Irish Banks and organised by the Royal Dublin Society and the AC. Arts Council, *1978 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1979), 24. The European Community Youth Orchestra (ECYO) became known as the European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO) in 1993.

⁶³⁰ The term 'human capital' was coined by American economist, Theodore William Schultz (1902-1998) in 1960. The theory asserts that investment in an individual's education and training is similar to a capital investment and will improve performance. Schultz argued that education could satisfy economic as well as cultural requirements. For further information on the human capital theory see Theodore W. Schultz, "Investment in Human Capital," *American Economic Review* 51, no. 1 (March 1961): 1-17 and Gary Becker, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964). According to Blundell et al (2001) there are three distinct returns to education, namely, the social return, the private return and the labour productivity return. Richard Blundell, Lorraine Margaret Dearden and Barbara Sianesi, *Estimating the Returns to Education: Models, Methods and Results* (London: University of London and Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2001).

⁶³¹ O'Sullivan, *Cultural Politics and Irish Education since the 1950s*, 247.

to society on a par with other essential services such as “health, education and social welfare”⁶³² and, consequently, state grants to the AC steadily increased.⁶³³ In this context, the AC’s commissioned assessment of the status of the arts in Irish education, *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education* (known as the Benson Report after its author, Ciarán Benson), was published in 1979 and contained official recognition of the MAI’s contribution to music in Ireland.⁶³⁴ It was evident from the findings of the Benson Report that the MAI was amongst the most influential organisations in shaping music education in Ireland at this time. This Report, influenced by the UNESCO Report, *The Place and Function of Art in Contemporary Life* (1977),⁶³⁵ was one of the first reports to focus on all aspects of the arts, as opposed to the visual arts alone. It pointed out that art in Irish society performed a combined role of allowing society to “reflect on itself, on its traditions and directions of development” whilst also playing “a central role in enabling members of a society to transcend mundane life.”⁶³⁶

Among its one hundred and nineteen recommendations, the Benson Report recommended the setting up of a specialist educational arts service and proposed the establishment, by the DoE, of a consultative committee to review regularly the development of the arts in education. The Benson Report and the AC’s Annual Report of 1980 were critical of the DoE for not giving “sustained or serious consideration to the state of the arts in our education system”.⁶³⁷ It is hardly surprising that only one recommendation was addressed in the DoE’s subsequent *White Paper on Educational Development* (December 1980).⁶³⁸ The Department justified the poor standing of the

⁶³² Marie Bourke, “Museum Learning Comes of Age in Ireland,” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 91, no. 363 (Autumn 2002): 239.

⁶³³ Government funding of the AC increased from £1,565,000 in 1978, £2,340,000 in 1979 to £5,936,000 in 1986.

⁶³⁴ The publication of *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education* coincided with the International Year of the Child. The Report cemented the AC’s commitment to the arts in education. A number of Arts Education Advisory Committees were set up in light of the Report, namely the South East Education Advisory Committee (1980) which represented educational interests in schools and communities in Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary South, Waterford and Wexford. The AC implemented many recommendations from the Report and the results were reviewed in Donald Herron’s *Deaf Ears: A Provision of Music Education in Irish Schools* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1985).

⁶³⁵ Ciarán Benson, *The Place of the Arts in Irish Education* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1979), 16.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28. The Report also provided a survey of the number of schools offering music for the Junior and Senior (Leaving) Certificate and other state exams in 1976/1977. It exposed some alarming statistics revealing the poor standing of music in certain parts of the country, e.g. that music to Leaving Certificate level was not available in secondary schools in Roscommon and Offaly and only 4 out of 44 schools taught music to this level in Meath.

⁶³⁷ Arts Council, *1980 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1982), 41.

⁶³⁸ The DoE supported the proposal to set up a committee to assess the level of artistic and creative activities in second level schools. This was addressed in ‘The Arts’ in the *White Paper on Educational Development* (December 1980). However, details of the structure of the committee and the implementation of its work were not provided.

arts in the education system by arguing that the demand and “pressure for examination results in the traditional subject-areas” was “less urgent in art-related subjects” in schools and that many of the proposals were un-implementable.⁶³⁹

The Benson Report praised the MAI for its contribution to music in Ireland, acknowledging its involvement with the IYO, SRS, regional development work and its positive efforts in complying with the AC’s desire to professionalise its activities. It drew attention to the fact that the DoE’s funding of the IYO was inadequate and expressed the view that course fees were excessive and discouraging for some young musicians. An interesting and courageous recommendation from the Report was that the DoE and the AC should co-operate for the greater “advantage of Irish music.”⁶⁴⁰ This was an intelligent recommendation, as co-operation between both bodies could have achieved substantial improvements in the training of young orchestral instrumentalists similar to that available in the UK. However, it was not realistic to expect significant co-operation between the two, particularly in light of the many criticisms of the DoE in the Benson Report.

In the section dealing with ‘Arts to the Schools’, the Report complimented the MAI’s SRS and drew attention to the DoE’s reduction in the funding of the scheme in 1977 and 1978 (£4,000 for each year) which resulted in the curtailment of recitals despite a demand for the service.⁶⁴¹ MAI chairman, Pat O’Kelly wrote to the DoE on 24 February, 1977, requesting a re-instatement of the previous year’s grant of £4500 (SRS £2,750 and £1750 IYO) and possible increase to £5,990 (SRS £3,230 and IYO £2,760). He explained the serious repercussions of the reduction of the grant-in-aid in 1977, stating that its secretary and artists had not been paid and, as a result, further engagements would have to be cancelled. O’Kelly elucidated the differentiation between the SRS and IYO and requested that they be treated as two separate

The White Paper was remarkable in that it was the first to contain a designated chapter on the arts. Though little progress was made in arts education, it did show some acknowledgement of the need for arts education.

⁶³⁹ An Roinn Oideachais, *White Paper on Educational Development* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1980), 65.

⁶⁴⁰ Benson, *The Place of the Arts*, 97. In 1978, IYO course fees were £100 (3 courses per year) which represented 75% of the Orchestra’s income and were, therefore, necessary for the survival of the IYO. The DoE’s grant was £1500 in 1978.

⁶⁴¹ The DoE took over funding the SRS from the Gulbenkian Foundation in 1973. In 1976 the SRS arranged 153 recitals in secondary schools a minimum of 20 miles outside Dublin. This figure was reduced to 119 in 1977 due to a £250 shortfall in DoE funding. MAI, *1977 MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 48, 1.

entities in hope of securing greater funding.⁶⁴² This correspondence resulted in a meeting between MAI and DoE officials in March, 1977; however, the grant remained the same in 1978.⁶⁴³

The Benson Report noted MAI's refusal to connect SRS concerts to the secondary school music syllabus, explaining that the purpose of SRS was to inculcate a 'genuine' interest in, and love of, music rather than aid pupils in examinations.⁶⁴⁴ Judging by the number of SRS concerts at this time, the scheme was popular in schools, but its failure to attract independent funding was worrying. From the accounts of the SRS, it is evident that the scheme was expensive to run; administration was costly (despite being shared with the IYO) and fees and expenses paid to artists were a burden on the MAI. Considering the average weekly salary in 1978 was £25⁶⁴⁵ and that most of the musicians who took part in the SRS (and country tours) were drawn from professional bodies such as the RTÉ orchestras, Garda or Army Bands and/or teaching profession, artists' fees and expenses were comparatively high. As the majority of the musicians involved in the SRS were already gainfully employed, I wonder could lower fees and expenses not have been negotiated or other (freelance) musicians of equivalent standard employed in their place. Table 6.1 shows the average fee paid to artists, their expenses and the income received from schools in 1978

Table 6.1. SRS Average Income and Expenditure (1978)

Average Artists' Fee ⁶⁴⁶	Travel Expenses	Daily Subsistence	Income from School
£50	2.86p per gallon	£9	£25

Source: Data derived from MAI Annual Report 1978 and SRS Accounts (1978), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 48.

⁶⁴² Letter from Pat O'Kelly (MAI chairman) 24 February, 1977 to DoE, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 18.

⁶⁴³ MAI, *1977 MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 48, 1.

⁶⁴⁴ Benson, *The Place of the Arts*, 89.

⁶⁴⁵ <http://eumatters.ie/getmedia/a6fbe03e-a168-4ac7-a6f9-f0903845761f/CSO-ireland-and-EU-Doc.aspx> (accessed 21 July, 2011).

⁶⁴⁶ Musicians usually performed at two or three schools per day and often shared mileage.

Table 6.2 shows the fee and expenses paid to artists for regional lectures/recitals run in conjunction with VECs in 1985.

Table 6.2. Adult Education Lecture/Recitals (1985)

Individual Fee	Overnight Allowance	Meal Allowance	Mileage	Income from Venue
£200	£10 (over 60 miles)	£7	2.86p per gallon	£110

Source: Data derived from *MAI Annual Report 1985*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Boxes 23 and 43.

Both these tables supply irrefutable evidence of financial unsustainability into the future and, had the MAI been more financially prudent and accountable in this respect, its educational efforts may have inspired greater confidence among state agencies. As it happened, support for its efforts, so explicit in the Benson Report, probably led it falsely to believe that its own rhetoric and administrative ability had the general approval of the AC and its government paymaster. It was more probable that the Benson Report, in acknowledging the important efforts of the MAI in certain areas, was signalling areas of state sponsored need that were coming under scrutiny in a time of financial restriction. It was this, more than any other that brought the workings of the MAI and its accounting procedures into greater focus by responsible state agencies. In suggesting professionalising the workings of the Association, Benson may have been reinforcing in a more positive way a view commonly held within the AC and its liaising government departments.

The final area of merit mentioned in the Benson Report was the MAI’s employment in 1978 of its first full-time professional organiser, P.J. Power, which enabled the Association to “enlarge and expand” its activities and “achieve its objective of promoting music throughout Ireland.”⁶⁴⁷ The Benson Report suggested that the appointment would project the MAI onto a

⁶⁴⁷ Benson, *The Place of the Arts*, 103. The Report also mentioned the valuable service the MAI offered to teachers and young people outside the school timetable. Had the MAI developed these two areas into music workshops for young people and in-service courses for teachers at this stage, it could have created a niche for itself, one with ample room for expansion. *Ibid.*, 104.

professional footing and “enlarge and expand the MAI's present activities and more effectively achieve its objective of promoting music throughout Ireland.”⁶⁴⁸

Considering that this Report marked the beginning of the professionalisation of the arts and that the AC's Annual Reports of 1978 and 1979 acknowledged the over-reliance on volunteers to promote classical music in Ireland, it is surprising that the word voluntary is used only once in the Benson Report. In its place the term amateur is used. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the achievements of Olive Smith in Chapter 5, volunteerism does not always equate to amateurism which, at times, is used to convey some lack of expertise. In the Government's White Paper, *Supporting Voluntary Activity* (2000), volunteering is described as

... the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes. Voluntary activities are undertaken of a person's own free will, without payment (except for the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses).⁶⁴⁹

Bussell and Forbes⁶⁵⁰ offered two main motivational categories which beget the volunteer, namely altruism or a desire to assist fellow human beings and egoism whereby the personal goals or psychological needs of the volunteer are satisfied. The birth of the MAI in 1948 was triggered by the goodwill of a group of Irish men and women who volunteered their services to elevate the status of classical music in Ireland. This volunteering spirit is still strong in musical activities today such as the Feis Ceoil, whose voluntary committee work tirelessly to promote “excellence in the learning and performance of music across all ages, levels and disciplines”.⁶⁵¹ These and similar organisations could not survive without the dedication and commitment of volunteers.⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., 103.

⁶⁴⁹ Government Publications Office, *Supporting Voluntary Activity: White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector* (Dublin: Government Publications Office, 2000), 37.

⁶⁵⁰ For further information see Helen Bussell and Deborah Forbes, “Understanding the Volunteer Market: The What, Where, Who and Why of Volunteering,” *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 7 no. 3 (2002): 244-257.

⁶⁵¹ <http://feisceoil.ie> (accessed 6 July, 2011). According to the Citizens' Information Board of Ireland volunteering is now valued at €200-600 million in kind. http://citizensinformationboard.ie/publications/voluntary_sector/managing_volunteers/2introduction_publications_voluntary_managing.html (accessed 6 July, 2011).

⁶⁵² 2011 was the European Year of Volunteering and the National Day of Volunteering took place on 30 September 2011. The 2006 National Census was the first to raise the question of citizens' participation in voluntary work. The Census asked citizens if they had taken part in voluntary, unpaid work in the four weeks preceding the date of the

It begs the question, why did the MAI need to be professionalised? Since its inception, the Feis Ceoil attracted a large number of volunteers and still functions successfully. However, the important difference between the two organisations is that the Feis Ceoil did not qualify for AC funding for various reasons and was forced to secure title sponsors to ensure its independence and longevity. The MAI had never explored private sponsorship and this may have prompted Benson to suggest a need to employ professional expertise to support its voluntary leadership.

6.4 MAI Three Year Expansion Plan

Following a particularly successful period of activity, the MAI commissioned P.J. Power to prepare a three-year plan for the Association in 1978. This signalled the MAI's commitment to re-structuring itself as a first step towards professionalisation and becoming "a strong active part in the musical life of Ireland."⁶⁵³ Power's Plan suggested establishing a national organisation with eight regional committees and recommended substantial changes to the election of Council members. In line with the AC's policy of stimulating community arts in regional areas and, as part of the MAI's commitment to expanding its profile and improving its services, MAI:

- established contacts with regional arts officers
- embarked on regionalising some of its structures
- co-ordinated a number of amateur groups nationwide and
- organised forty-six concerts at different venues throughout the country, incorporating a broad range of music.⁶⁵⁴

Though the Power Plan contained visionary proposals, only one recommendation to issue contracts to regional concert promoting partners was fully implemented. In its Annual Report of

census under the following four categories: social or charitable organisation, religious group or church, sporting organisation, political or cultural organisation, or any other voluntary activity. According to the results, 16.4% of the population aged 15 and over (or one in five) took part in at least one of the voluntary activities listed in the census, 465,624 hours were spent volunteering in Ireland and 15% of those aged 65 and over were engaged in volunteering. <http://www.cso.ie/en/index.html> (accessed 4 September, 2011).

⁶⁵³ P.J. Power, *MAI Three Year Plan* (Dublin: MAI, 1979), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 13, 4.

⁶⁵⁴ Arts Council, *1979 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1980), 21. As part of the MAI's policy of collaborating with regional Arts Officers, its regional committee established links with arts organisations in Galway/Mayo and the Regional Arts Committee of Donegal. By 1983 the MAI Council included a number of members outside Dublin: Geoffrey Spratt (Cork), Aiveen Kearney (Cork), Clare Skerret (Kilkenny), Jane O'Leary (West) and Bernadette Cleary (Midlands). This regional sub-committee received travelling expenses for Council and sub-committee meetings and, together with the Music Officer, advised the MAI Council on regional policy.

1979, the MAI Council welcomed Power's Plan, describing it as "a major report containing many far-reaching recommendations for re-organisation and expansion."⁶⁵⁵ However, in admitting that it only examined the first section of the Plan due to "pressures of time", the MAI's commitment to restructuring was questionable and one wonders if the Plan was prepared merely to satisfy AC funding requirements.⁶⁵⁶ Though the Plan was publicly welcomed, the existence of an unsigned memo in the Archive, which heavily criticises the Plan, engenders suspicion and also contradicts the *MAI 1979 Annual Report* which stated that pressures of time prevented its Council from examining the entire document. The memo contains hand-written criticism in the margins of Power's Plan and was particularly critical of Sections 3 and 4 which suggested the need for radical changes to the structure of the MAI and its Council. 'Anonymous' was vehemently opposed to Power's suggestion of an administrative committee but, principally, to any changes in the membership of the Council. At a time of exciting changes and developments in the arts in Ireland, it is disappointing to read such negative reactions. Had this policy document been fully implemented, the MAI could have pre-empted the AC's desire to re-structure the organisation. Since it was clear that the enthusiasm and anticipation surrounding Power's report was waning and that he clearly did not enjoy the full support of his Council to implement it, Power resigned as Music Officer after nine months to take up a position in Limerick.⁶⁵⁷

Officially, the MAI Council described Power's tenure as extremely influential and opined that his legacy would impact on the Association for many years.⁶⁵⁸ Power was replaced by Eoin Garrett⁶⁵⁹ in July 1979. He recommended that Power's Report be sent to all MAI members, but this did not occur.⁶⁶⁰ Without doubt, the MAI was impecunious at this time, but a summary of

⁶⁵⁵ MAI, *1979 MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 48, 1.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ At an MAI meeting on 3 April, 1979, MAI chairman, Pat O'Kelly stated that the "failure of Council to take further action on the Music Officer's official report must be regarded as a very important factor in his decision to leave the MAI." Also at this meeting it was highlighted that the Music Officer had gone over budget and that the AC, having initiated the appointment of a new Music Officer and secretary and encouraged the expansion of the Country Tours Scheme had a responsibility to support the MAI in this initiative. MAI, MAI Minutes of Meeting on 3 April, 1979, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 43.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁹ Eoin Garrett was editor of *Counterpoint* (1978-1980), Assistant Secretary (1977-1978) and Music Organiser (1979-1985).

⁶⁶⁰ MAI, *Report of MAI Music Organiser*, MAI Council Meeting on 20 February, 1980, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 1.

the Plan could have been included with the monthly *Counterpoint* magazine or alternate avenues of funding or sponsorship could have been explored to disseminate Power's Report. It is a matter of concern that Power's Plan, the second most important one to be produced by the Association since its Memorandum: *Music and the Nation* (1949) was suppressed by Council members for their own reasons. This attitude further fuels the suggestion that, in commissioning this document, the MAI was merely pleasing its pay-master, the AC, while at the same time, exercising a certain degree of autonomy in choosing not to implement its recommendations. The evidence suggests that MAI wished to receive the financial and artistic benefits of professionalising but on its own terms.

While the creation of a full-time Music Organiser presented the Association with opportunities to broaden its scope and improve services, it also created organisational difficulties for the MAI. Increased funding led to demands for greater productivity, increased transparency and AC representation on the MAI Council "in view of their increased financial involvement with the Association."⁶⁶¹ The duties of the employees increased but, from my discussions with those involved with the Association at that time and from evidence in the Archives, it would appear that Garrett's responsibilities were not clearly defined and, in particular, he was expected to undertake extra tasks beyond his remit.⁶⁶² The structure of the MAI was such that the Music Organiser and the Office's three part-time employees reported to the voluntary MAI Council.⁶⁶³ Organisations in the not-for-profit or voluntary sector are often challenged when paid staff are introduced, as invariably tensions and resentment arise between voluntary and paid staff.

Most paid jobs in the not-for-profit sector were at one stage done by pioneering volunteers. As the activities became too much for part-time volunteers, and as organisations became legitimised and received funding, paid staff were gradually employed to take on these roles. If all volunteers are fully aware and supportive of this process, the transition is likely to be smooth. If, however, this is done without adequate consultation ... the consequences are likely to be negative.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶¹ MAI, MAI Minutes of Meeting on 19 April, 1978, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 43.

⁶⁶² One source suggested that there was a feeling amongst some Council members that employees were paid for their work and, therefore, Council members should not be expected to work as hard as they had previously. This is mere speculation, as many Council members still gave generously of their time. However, some evidently felt strongly about the matter and this may have educed negative sentiment.

⁶⁶³ At this time, the MAI employed Eoin Garrett (full time Music Officer), Eilish MacGabhann (SRS Officer), Gladys MacNevin (part-time Advertising Manager, *Counterpoint*) and a part-time secretary.

⁶⁶⁴ <http://www.volunteeringireland.ie/page.php?id=7> (accessed 1 August, 2011).

The MAI was not alone in experiencing difficulties of this nature in its journey towards becoming a professional organisation; studies have shown that many voluntary organisations experience similar problems.⁶⁶⁵ However, this period of transition was a difficult one for the MAI and it is clear that, within the organisation, the roles of the volunteer and the professional should have been more clearly defined. Relations between certain employees and the MAI Council broke down and the conflict between volunteer and paid employee became a major concern for the funding authorities, especially the AC. It is evident from later correspondence in the MAI Archive (1985 and 1986) that, in seeking to professionalise the organisation, the AC wished to completely change its structure, replacing the Council with a chief executive officer answerable directly to the AC.⁶⁶⁶ In seeking to mould the Association into a fully professional concert promoting organisation with no voluntary committee, the AC fell foul of an intransigent MAI Council, and, as distrust deepened, it led to the Association being bypassed. As the relationship between the MAI and the AC deteriorated, funding that was once earmarked for the MAI was redirected elsewhere. Finally, in 1986, with the establishment of Music Network, the concert management function of the MAI was surplus to requirements and dissolved.

One may question why the MAI needed to professionalise? From its inception, its voluntary members served the organisation well over the years and, by the 1980s, it had largely achieved its objectives. Nonetheless, in trying to diversify into new challenges, the organisation was unable to manage its finances transparently while, in retaining its focus on established activities which other organisations were accomplishing at a higher and more professional level, administrative resources in the MAI were stretched beyond its capacity. Unable to cope financially because of its fractured organisation and with clear signs of divisiveness within its ranks, the MAI must have regretted its failure to take advantage of the improved structures afforded by Power's Plan. With the benefit of hindsight, its Council members must have realised the lost opportunities and the wider national influence that it offered. Their reluctance to adapt to

⁶⁶⁵ For further information on this topic, see Noreen Byrne, Olive McCarthy and Mary O'Shaughnessy, *A Study of Volunteerism in Irish Credit Unions and Social Enterprises* (Cork: University College Cork, 2004) and Peter Beresford and S. Croft, eds., *A Challenge to Change: Practical Experiences of Building User-Led Services* (London: National Institute for Social Work, 1993).

⁶⁶⁶ The MAI Council consisted of fourteen voluntary members and various sub-committees who were solely responsible for policy-making and decision-making. The AC viewed this structure as weak. Summary of a meeting attended by Patricia Quinn (AC Music Officer), Martin Drury (AC Education Officer) and Brian Grimson (MAI chairman) on 6 May, 1986, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15.

a new era in arts administration and their insistence on maintaining their own older administrative order was an obvious major error of judgement that would cost the Association dearly. The ensuing consequences disabled the organisation's ability to exercise any persuasive advocacy for its own educational activities and, having lost the confidence of its funding authorities, the MAI embarked on a period of decline from which it would not be able to recover.

6.5 Diversification and redirection

Despite considerable advancements in the status of the arts in Ireland, the Irish at home were considered to be “the least cultured and least interested in the arts of all the peoples of the European Community.”⁶⁶⁷ Whilst Europe and the USA experienced a growing cultural democracy⁶⁶⁸ from the late 1960s onwards, Ireland's potential cultural development was eclipsed by social, political and economic issues in tandem with the conflict in Northern Ireland, particularly the civil rights concerns. Cultural identity and cultural democracy were, nonetheless, issues of concern and, from 1979 onwards, the AC enthusiastically explored how it could best influence education in schools through the arts. By eliminating the “conception of the arts as trivial or merely recreational” and firmly embedding the arts within formal education, it endeavoured to persuade those in authority of the significant, worthwhile contribution the arts can make “in the area of affective learning.”⁶⁶⁹ Improvements in arts education had been actively pursued by the MAI since its inception, but the gradual move towards opening up access to the arts for all meant that the MAI would have to broaden the appeal of its SRS, making it more accessible to all students (not merely classical music students/enthusiasts), embrace the music of other countries and include an element of audience interaction in its programming. The SRS was not the only branch of the MAI requiring diversification; the entire MAI needed redirection in order to respond adequately to national and international reforms in the arts. Accordingly the MAI embarked upon five important initiatives to improve its standing in the early 1980s:

⁶⁶⁷ Arts Council, “Chairman's Introduction,” *1979 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1979). Two important incentives were introduced to limit the attraction of the greater artistic opportunities open to Irish artists abroad, namely, tax concessions for artists (1969) and the establishment of Aosdána in 1979. Members of Aosdána are drawn from the artistic community (writers, visual artists and composers) and receive a tax free stipend over five years of €17,810 per annum (2011) called a *cnuas*. For further information on Aosdána see <http://aosdana.artscouncil.ie> (Accessed 20 September, 2010).

⁶⁶⁸ By cultural democracy, I refer to the general access to and full inclusion in the cultural life of society.

⁶⁶⁹ Colm Ó hEocha, “Foreword,” *The Arts Council and Education 1979-89* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1989), 7.

1. a vigorous membership drive was undertaken resulting in an increase of 30% and corporate membership (music societies) doubled
2. its administrative services were employed by two additional festivals,⁶⁷⁰ namely the Dublin International Organ Festival⁶⁷¹ and the Festival in Great Irish Houses
3. plans for regionalisation were drawn up
4. efforts to publicise its activities were made through participation at the Brighter Homes and DIY Exhibition (March 1983), Newpark Music Centre's Open Day (June 1983) and the setting up of an information desk in the foyer of the NCH on a three month trial basis⁶⁷²
5. the music magazine, *Soundpost* was established in 1981.

These initiatives necessitated increased grants and staff and relocation to larger office space, all of which MAI secured from the AC. Table 6.3 shows a significant increase in grant funding from the AC for the period 1978 to 1984, an indicator that the AC still remained supportive of the work of the MAI.

Table 6.3. AC Grants to the MAI and MAI Salaries (1978-1984)

Year	Number of Regional Concerts	AC Grant (excluding SRS grant) £	Salaries £
1978/79	44	12,750	7,628
1980	50	19,000	12,287
1981	54	24,600	16,305
1982	44	32,750	19,150
1983	49	36,350	34,533
1984	30 ⁶⁷³	42,000	38,000

Source: Data derived from *MAI Annual Reports (1978-1984)*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, various boxes.

⁶⁷⁰ The Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival was administered by the MAI from 1969.

⁶⁷¹ The Dublin International Organ Festival was founded and chaired by organist and academic, Professor Gerard Gillen and first held from 29 June to 6 August 1980. The Festival was organised in association with the MAI with Eoin Garrett as Festival Administrator. As a result of a disagreement over the administration fee charged by the MAI, the Dublin International Organ Festival parted company with the MAI for the 1986 Festival.

⁶⁷² MAI, 1983 *MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 25.

⁶⁷³ Country tours and concerts ceased in September 1984, but resumed on a much smaller scale in 1985.

These new initiatives were an attempt by the MAI to regain its role as foremost national music promotional agency, as a national pressure group for music education and an advisor on policy matters concerning the future of music in Ireland.⁶⁷⁴ MAI staff and salaries increased significantly and, by 1983, the Association employed four staff members and moved to new larger premises on Grafton Street, Dublin.⁶⁷⁵

By comparing the years 1981 and 1984, a period of economic recession, an interesting pattern emerges which indicates the scale of the problem facing the MAI in its administration of public funding. Table 6.4 presents the evidence statistically.

Table 6.4. AC Grants to the MAI and MAI Salaries (1981 and 1984)

Year	Concerts	AC Grant £	Salaries	
			£	As % of grant
1981	54	24,600	16,305	66.3%
1984	30	42,000	38,000	90.45%
	44.4% less	70.7% more	133.1% more	

Source: Data derived from MAI Annual Reports (1981 and 1984), NLI, ACC 6000, various boxes.

Over those four years, state funding had increased by £17,400 representing a rise of over 70% on the 1981 grant. At the same time, regional concert activity had decreased over that period by over 44%, while expenditure on MAI salaries had risen by a staggering 133%. To put it in more stark terms, in 1981, MAI salaries accounted for over 66% of its grant, but by 1984, its salaries took up over 90% of its AC budget. This was clearly unsustainable and, arguably, indefensible given the time.

Over this period, the relationship between the AC and the MAI was healthy as evidenced by the increased funding; the AC praised the MAI in its Annual Reports, noting the success of its crusading efforts to diversify and improve “prospects and plans for the future”,⁶⁷⁶ co-ordinate its

⁶⁷⁴ MAI, 1981 MAI Arts Council Grant Application, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15, 2.

⁶⁷⁵ In April 1983, the MAI offices relocated to 34 Grafton Street, Dublin 2 having previously rented office space since 1967, from McCullough Pigott Ltd, Suffolk Street, Dublin 2.

⁶⁷⁶ Arts Council, 1981 Arts Council Annual Report (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1982), 28.

activities⁶⁷⁷ and consolidate musical activity outside the capital.⁶⁷⁸ MAI continued its diversification by launching a pilot scheme in conjunction with Co. Westmeath VEC in 1983, presenting adult courses (lectures/recitals) at Mullingar Vocational School, Westmeath and Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo.⁶⁷⁹ MAI chairman, George Bannister⁶⁸⁰ declared the Association as well poised “to bring a new and dynamic standard of professionalism to its work in organising concerts and festivals and co-ordinating music in general.”⁶⁸¹ Though, the MAI was responding positively to AC’s requests at this time, it is possible that the unsustainable state of its accounts and the extent of its *laissez-faire* approach to its administration may not have been fully appreciated because of its overt compliance with AC requests.

The final and most important reform requested by the AC was a complete re-structuring of the Association and the MAI promised to deliver this in its 1984 AC funding application. Here, the MAI sought funding for the creation of three posts: full-time organiser of the SRS, part-time SRS book-keeper and a new position of clerical assistant (as well as retaining the positions of secretary and Music Officer). *Apropos* the position of Music Officer, the MAI acknowledged the onerous duties attached to the post and suggested dividing these among two posts, i.e. Events Organiser and Administrator.⁶⁸² In relation to its Council, the MAI proposed a reduction in the number of meetings per year and the setting up of a management committee, whereby three Council members would meet with the Music Officer on a regular basis to supervise the day-to-day running of the office and oversee policy implementation.⁶⁸³ There is no evidence that these plans were implemented, and they appeared to be an attempt by the MAI to placate its main funding agency. What was not realised at this time is that, in requesting changes to the way it worked with the Music Officer, the AC was clearly signalling concern about the Council’s workings and possible confusing interference with the day-to-day operation of the Association. The Council’s overseeing of events was an unwieldy process whereby everything, even the most mundane decision, had to have overall Council approval. Of itself, this was not a

⁶⁷⁷ Arts Council, *1980 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1981), 26.

⁶⁷⁸ Arts Council, *1982 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1983), 25.

⁶⁷⁹ 5 lecture/recitals took place as part of the pilot scheme in 1983.

⁶⁸⁰ George Bannister succeeded Pat O’Kelly as MAI chairman in 1983.

⁶⁸¹ Arts Council, *1983 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1984), 31.

⁶⁸² This suggestion by the MAI was in response to concerns voiced by the AC in 1983 regarding Eoin Garret’s workload.

⁶⁸³ MAI, *1984 MAI Arts Council Grant Application*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15.

problem but for the fact that individual Council members, having an inflated view of their own importance in the overall scheme of things, denied consensus through individual strength of opinion rather than democratically deferring to an overall common good. All this impacted on any real hope of structural reform and, taken in conjunction with the financial difficulties referred to earlier, augured badly for the MAI in a time of recession and its survival into the future.

6.6 A source of funding and music education

The MAI's dependence on AC funding and its inability to match state grants with privately generated funds was a worrying trend in the early 1980s. Philip McCallion argues that such financial dependency on a single source could expose voluntary and semi-professional organisations to the vagaries of financial policy as national resource environments change. On the other hand, McCallion shows that dealing with multiple sources of funding and multiple sets of regulations can also prove challenging for not-for-profit, voluntary organisations.⁶⁸⁴ Apart from an annual SRS grant from the DoE, the MAI did not secure any alternative major source of funding, other than the AC. Further, there is no evidence of investigations into alternative sources of funding by the MAI over that period and, more importantly, there is no long-term planning. Grant-funded organisations will argue that it is impossible and/or futile for them to produce long-term plans as funding is generally on a year-to-year basis and, consequently, only short terms plans can be executed and achieved. Even so, the MAI's confidence in its continued AC funding should have provoked some alternative plans, but it would appear that the MAI was not aware of AC's worries about its management capabilities. In its *1983 Annual Report*, the MAI acknowledged the generosity of its "major financial supporter", the AC, especially at a time when other arts organisations were experiencing significant reductions in their funding.⁶⁸⁵ The Report acknowledged the MAI's special relationship with the AC, in particular with Marion

⁶⁸⁴ Philip McCallion, "Manager as Resource Developer," in *The Handbook of Social Welfare Management*, ed. Rino J. Patti (California: Sage, 2000), 369.

⁶⁸⁵ The MAI's *1983 Annual Report* covered an extended period from 1 August 1982 until 31 December 1983 in order to fall in line with a change in the financial year to the calendar year. MAI, *1983 MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 25.

Creely (Music and Opera Officer) and AC directors, Colm Ó Briain and Adrian Munnelly,⁶⁸⁶ who were always accessible to them.⁶⁸⁷

A further indication of the AC's confidence in the MAI and its good standing amongst other music organisations at this time, was the AC's invitation to MAI chairman, George Bannister, to join the organising committee of the European Music Year (EMY) in January 1983.⁶⁸⁸ As part of its contribution to EMY and in line with its policy of diversification, the MAI organised seminars in Limerick in 1984 to "talk about their hopes and frustrations and how the MAI could help them in 1985"⁶⁸⁹ in anticipation of the EMY (1985).⁶⁹⁰ Many regional arts committees held similar seminars throughout the country and concluded that the main obstacles facing music were the need for greater access to music education and the promotion of music.⁶⁹¹ Arising from these conclusions, the AC's EMY Committee commissioned the report, *Deaf Ears?: A Report on the Provision of Music Education in Irish Schools* by Donald Herron. The Report (1985) criticised severely the status of music in education in the country.

By any standards the state of music education is not a happy one in Ireland. That so much good work is being done by individual schools and teachers is all the more remarkable and encouraging. But this is not enough and should not be justified as being enough. If there is a defence of the present situation to be made on educational grounds then it should be heard.⁶⁹²

The concern about the standard or provision of music education in Ireland was not new, but "the sense of urgency about the need to do something positive for music" in schools and third level institutions was more unrelenting and persistent than ever before.⁶⁹³ In his report, Donald

⁶⁸⁶ Adrian Munnelly, AC Director (1983-1996).

⁶⁸⁷ MAI, 1983 MAI Annual Report, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 25.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ The committee comprised of thirty members with Frank Casey as chairman and Brian Boydell and Richard Stokes as vice chairmen.

⁶⁹⁰ MAI, MAI Minutes of Meeting on 26 May, 1984, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 43.

⁶⁹¹ As part of its contribution to EMY, the MAI presented a mini festival of twentieth-century music on 26 and 27 January, 1985. Two concerts took place at St. Stephen's Church, Mount Street and a third at the Hugh Lane Gallery, Parnell Square featuring music by Gerald Barry, John Buckley, Bernard Geary, James Wilson, Jerome de Bromhead, Frank Corcoran, Alban Berg and Olivier Messiaen.

⁶⁹² Arts Council, 1984 Arts Council Annual Report (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1985), 29.

⁶⁹³ Donald Herron, *Deaf Ears? A Report on the Provision of Music Education in Irish Schools* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1985), 9.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 7. Many of these ideas were voiced previously by Larchet, Fleischmann and many others interested in improving the standard of music education in Ireland.

Herron urged all bodies responsible for music education in the country, namely the Curriculum and Examinations Board and the DoE, to unite with the common goal of formulating a “comprehensive, coherent, national policy for music education.”⁶⁹⁴ Predicting the customary financial excuses to explain inactivity in developing a comprehensive national programme for music education, Herron insisted on the differentiation between a lack of available funding to formulate policy and the failure to determine the educational role and importance of music education. Considering education was a key area of interest for the MAI, it is surprising that no official statement was made by the Association following the publication of the Report, particularly in light of the increased number of educational and community arts organisations and interest-groups such as, Community Arts for Everyone (CAFE)⁶⁹⁵ and the Arts Community Education (ACE),⁶⁹⁶ all vying for funding and exposure. These organisations encouraged the celebration of the arts by everyone in schools as well as at all levels of society but, indirectly, they challenged the future of MAI’s position within Irish musical endeavour. In order to compete with these and other arts organisations, the MAI would have to solidify and update its current practices whilst also identifying other possible niche areas. One such area explored by the MAI was the expansion of its monthly members’ bulletin and diary.

6.7 *Soundpost* magazine

Since October 1948, the MAI kept its members informed of musical events and important musical matters through its monthly bulletin and, from March 1969, through its *Counterpoint* magazine. Whilst *Counterpoint*

... has served well for many years ... the virtual explosion of [musical] activity in the last ten years has made it impossible to give adequate coverage to many important areas which have influenced the growth of our musical life.⁶⁹⁷

The MAI decided to expand its monthly bulletin in response to there being “no outlet for the publication of academic articles on music in Ireland”.⁶⁹⁸ In doing this, it hoped to stimulate

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁹⁵ Community Arts for Everyone founded in 1984 was funded by the AC and acted as a national umbrella organisation for community-based arts groups.

⁶⁹⁶ Arts Community Education (ACE) founded in 1985 was a three-year project, funded by the AC and the Gulbenkian Foundation. In 1985 it had 14 arts centres in Ireland.

⁶⁹⁷ Honor Ó Brolcháin, “Editorial,” *Counterpoint* (March 1981), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15: 1.

musical debate and provide information on musical activity in Ireland. The decision to enlarge *Counterpoint* into a “full-size saleable music feature magazine” had been on the MAI agenda for a number of years and generated “many a heated argument” at successive AGMs.⁶⁹⁹ Though it believed that there was a market for a music periodical in Ireland (particularly since the imposition of taxation measures on foreign journals had resulted in the cessation of UK imported music journals), the MAI could not have financed such an endeavour from its own resources.⁷⁰⁰ As a result, it successfully applied for an AC grant to establish *Soundpost*.⁷⁰¹ According to the MAI’s AC Grant Application form in 1982, estimated target sales of the magazine for the first year (1981) were 2,500 and it projected that, by the third year, the magazine would be self-financing. However, subsequent grant applications and MAI accounts would demonstrate that this projection was inaccurate.⁷⁰²

When *Soundpost* was launched in April 1981, Honor Ó Brolcháin became its first editor.⁷⁰³ Michael Dervan assumed the role of reviews editor and Sally Sweeney acted as assistant. Much excitement surrounded the launch of the magazine and Charles Acton described it as “news of major musical importance.”⁷⁰⁴ The bi-monthly *Soundpost* featured upcoming events, interviews and reviews and, unlike MAI’s previous publications and newsletters, it was made available to non-members of the MAI for an annual subscription of £5.60. *Counterpoint* and the monthly bulletin were traditionally included in the MAI annual subscription but, apart from the first two complimentary issues of *Soundpost*, the magazine was only available to MAI members at a reduced fee of £3.60 (in addition to the MAI annual subscription of £8).⁷⁰⁵ The magazine was a major development for the MAI; it marked the beginning of professionalising its

⁶⁹⁸ MAI, 1980 MAI Arts Council Grant Application, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15, 3.

⁶⁹⁹ Pat O’Kelly, “To Counterpoint – A Farewell from the Chairman,” *Counterpoint* (March 1981), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15: 5.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ MAI had initially applied for an AC grant of £3,000 to establish *Soundpost* and proposed to seek the remaining £1500 from commercial sponsorship. Instead the AC granted the MAI the entire estimated cost of the magazine for its first year; £4500. MAI, 1980 MAI Arts Council Grant Application, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15.

⁷⁰² MAI, 1981 MAI Arts Council Grant Application, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15.

⁷⁰³ Honor Ó Brolcháin was editor of *Counterpoint* (mid 1980-1981).

⁷⁰⁴ “Soundpost in April,” *The Irish Times*, 20 February, 1981.

⁷⁰⁵ In 1981 the annual subscription for MAI membership and *Soundpost* was £15.60 for married couples and £7.60 for OAPs and students. MAI members received the first two editions of *Soundpost* free. Advertising rates in the magazine were as follows: £15 for an 1/8 page, £30 for a 1/4 page, £55 for a 1/2 page and £100 for a full page (all plus 10% V.A.T.).

activities and it demonstrated the MAI's commitment to diversifying and embracing a wider musical audience. Despite this optimism, a small group of MAI members did not approve of the venture, believing it to be outside its remit, while others felt the magazine should have been included in their annual subscription.⁷⁰⁶ Nonetheless, those members who did not wish to subscribe to *Soundpost* were kept updated on musical events in the intervening months with a *Diary of Events* and the *MAI News Sheet*.⁷⁰⁷

Contributions to *Soundpost* often engendered lively debate. Michael Taylor's article in *Soundpost* 17,⁷⁰⁸ on the limitations of using folk material in classical music, generated criticism from Aloys Fleischmann in *Soundpost* 18.⁷⁰⁹ Taylor and Fleischmann agreed that Bartók transcended this quandary but parted company regarding Dvorák and Vaughan Williams, whom Taylor felt belonged to the "taxidermist class, mounting the artless melodies in a suffocatingly rich context which deprived them of their vitality."⁷¹⁰ This discussion was reminiscent of contributions made by Fleischmann in *Ireland Today* (1936)⁷¹¹ and other musicians in *The Bell* nearly fifty years previously. Taylor cited other current concerns in the article such as the pressure exerted on artists to conform to what he claimed was RTE and NCH's desire to put "bums on seats at whatever artistic cost".⁷¹² He also chastised critics for their narrow-minded views. In his condemnation of critics, Taylor was not alone; composer Kevin O'Connell denounced critics as analysts in *Soundpost* 18.⁷¹³ Martin Adams, music critic and lecturer at Trinity College Dublin, protested about O'Connell's personal view in a letter entitled *Analysis Defended*.⁷¹⁴ In this, Adams harangued O'Connell's reflection on critics and analysts, claiming that O'Connell felt that only a composer could make legitimate commentary on music.

⁷⁰⁶ Various letters from MAI members, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15.

⁷⁰⁷ In January 1984, the MAI published the monthly bulletin, *MAI NEWS* for its members, at the request of several MAI members.

⁷⁰⁸ Michael Taylor, "Letters to the Editor: Artistic Pressures," *Soundpost* 17 (Dec 1983/Jan 1984), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 2.

⁷⁰⁹ Aloys Fleischmann, "Letters to the Editor: Taxidermist and Tradition," *Soundpost* 18 (Feb/Mar 1984), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 2.

⁷¹⁰ Michael Taylor, "Letters to the Editor," *Soundpost* 19 (April/May 1984), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 2.

⁷¹¹ Fleischmann, "Composition and the folk Idiom," 40.

⁷¹² Taylor, "Letters to the Editor," 2.

⁷¹³ Kevin O'Connell, "Personal View," *Soundpost* 18 (Feb/Mar 1984), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 7.

⁷¹⁴ Martin Adams, "Analysis Defended," *Soundpost* 19 (April/May 1984), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 9.



Figure 22. A selection of *Soundpost* magazines, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40.

The first year of the fledgling magazine's existence was a stormy passage; due to illness, Ó Brolcháin resigned as editor and was replaced by Michael Dervan⁷¹⁵ and Bernard Harris⁷¹⁶ as joint editors. Despite advertising revenue, subscriptions and financial injections from the AC (see Table 6.5 below), *Soundpost* was unable to 'keep afloat'.

Table 6.5. *Soundpost* Grants and Expenses (1981-1984)

Year	AC Grant £	Expenses £	Expenses expressed as a % of AC grant
1981	4,500	2,786	61.9%
1982	4,500	2,911	64.7%
1983	4,800	4,791	99.8%
1984	3,600	4,890	135.8%

Source: Data derived from MAI Annual Reports (1981-1984), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, various boxes.

Table 6.5 supplies proof positive of the scale of the financial difficulties relating to the production and publication of *Soundpost*. While acknowledging that these statistics do not take into account that sales or advertising revenue, which are not readily available in the Archive, but we know that *Soundpost*'s circulation fell far short of the predicted 2,500 copies. Had the circulation reached even 1,000 copies sold at full price, the income generated would have been more than adequate to make up the shortfall, although the enterprise would always be reliant on the AC grant. Instead, Table 6.5 tells a different story. Over its short four-year history, the expenses associated with the production of *Soundpost* increased alarmingly from approximately 62% to 136% of the AC grant. Although, in its final year, the reduction in the grant did contribute to its financial unviability, it also suggests some reticence on the part of the AC to input further finance into what was clearly becoming a doomed project.⁷¹⁷ In the end the AC lost

⁷¹⁵ Michael Dervan, music critic with *The Irish Times*.

⁷¹⁶ Bernard Harris, editor and founding director of the Contemporary Music Centre (1986-1990).

⁷¹⁷ Not all *Soundpost*'s problems were financial. Máirtín McCullough wrote a letter to *Soundpost*'s editor in February 1984 claiming that customers at his shop, McCullough Pigott's, complained about the magazine not arriving on the first of every month. *Soundpost* (February, 1984), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40.

patience, and decided to replace MAI's *Soundpost* with an independent magazine, *Music Ireland*, which was launched in November 1985 with Michael Dervan as editor.⁷¹⁸

An entire chapter of this thesis could be dedicated to the fortunes and misfortunes of *Soundpost*. My aim, however, is to present sufficient information on the magazine in order to illustrate the efforts of the MAI to diversify and professionalise its musical activities on the advice of the AC in the early 1980s. The concept of *Soundpost* gave the MAI a wonderful opportunity to display its organisational skills in producing a national music magazine of high quality, attract new members, advertise its other activities and gain credibility as a music agency of national importance. As with many of MAI's initiatives, financial mismanagement impacted on events and *Soundpost* became another example of a potentially brilliant idea 'gone awry'. At a time when funding of the arts was increasing, this was a particularly disappointing failure and the ghost of *Soundpost* lingered with the Association for many years after its demise. It suggested incompetence and an inability to adopt modern and transparent accounting practices. The debacle surrounding *Soundpost*

... heightened the [Arts] Council's awareness of problems arising in the operation of the magazine's publisher, the Music Association of Ireland. The Association was invited to define its objectives clearly in the light of the highly professional demands of today's musical life.⁷¹⁹

6.8 The MAI and its nadir 1985/1986

The misfortunes surrounding *Soundpost* had acted as a reality check for the AC and it would not release or advise the 1985 MAI grant until accounts for *Soundpost* were submitted.⁷²⁰ Individual MAI members also expressed their unease about recent events; Charles Acton's observation on the predicament in which the MAI found itself in 1985 was perceptive and the advice sensible: "the sooner the present MAI is dead and a new MAI with its original aims born,

⁷¹⁸ Music Ireland was launched by Minister for Arts and Culture, Ted Nealon in November 1985, and received £600 from the AC and £1,900 from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI). This amount was substantially increased the following year with an AC grant of £10,000 and £3,359 from the ACNI; similarly in 1987, when it received £16,700 from the AC and £3,300 from the ACN. Arts Council, *1985 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1986) and *1986 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1987).

⁷¹⁹ Arts Council, *1984 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1985), 29.

⁷²⁰ MAI, MAI Minutes of Meeting on 16 February, 1985, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 43.

the better.”⁷²¹ Acton voiced his dissatisfaction with the MAI’s aspiration to become a professional music promoter and considered it “part of what has brought it so low and into disrepute.”⁷²² He also expressed dissatisfaction with the ‘new’ MAI, accusing it of betraying its roots and primary objective of being “the voice of music” and instead evolving into “a minor concert promoting body”.⁷²³ With its newly acquired status and direction, Acton astutely claimed that the MAI was unable to speak as an authoritative voice on music policy in Ireland. In summary, he considered that the Association had lost its way. Acton was correct in that by the mid 1980s, the MAI had diverted considerably from its original manifesto. At this stage, however, I believe the MAI had achieved its principal objectives and many of its original interests would be better represented by other AC funded bodies solely dedicated to the needs of composers, music education, regional concerts, etc.

The eventual AC grant for 1985 of £36,500 (£5,500 less than 1984), which Michael Dervan later described as a “polite prelude to the withdrawal of support”, was still comparatively generous.⁷²⁴ However, the following year (1986), the MAI received considerably reduced funding of £21,800 (£10,500 of which was allocated to the SRS).⁷²⁵ Responding to the reduction in funding, the Association unwisely issued a press release in early 1986 stating that, since 1983, the AC had been “totally antipathetic, if not actively hostile, towards many of Ireland’s established organisations”, namely the Wexford Festival, Cork Choral Festival, Irish National Opera and Clonmel and Westport Arts Week.⁷²⁶ The AC responded stating that the MAI had been made aware of the Council’s dissatisfaction with particular aspects of its work for at least two years and that it was simply not “delivering the goods”.⁷²⁷

⁷²¹ Cited in Richard Pine, *Charles: The Life and World of Charles Acton 1914-1999* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2010), 283.

⁷²² Acton cancelled his membership in 1985 as a result of this discontent although the appointment of Grimson as chairman enticed him and his wife, Carol, back to the MAI. Letter from Charles Acton to Tom Moore, MAI Honorary Treasurer on 5 March, 1986, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15.

⁷²³ Ibid.

⁷²⁴ “Door Slammed on the MAI,” *The Irish Times*, 19 December, 1986. The MAI was not the only arts organisation to experience grant reductions in 1985 and 1986, but the reduction in 1986 was considerable. Dublin Grand Opera Society received an AC grant of £61,200 in 1986 (reduced from £84,700 in 1985) and Wexford Festival Opera’s grant was reduced to £30,300 in 1986 (from £77,700 in 1985).

⁷²⁵ MAI’s SRS also received a grant of £13,000 from the DoE.

⁷²⁶ MAI, *MAI Press Release* (1986). IRL-Dn Acc 6000. Box 7.

⁷²⁷ “Door Slammed on the MAI,” *The Irish Times*, 19 December 1986. At a meeting between the MAI and the AC in 1984, the AC indicated that if the MAI could not provide “a well-organised, well-run music organisation” to its

Table 6.6 below shows that the number of concerts, organised by the MAI in 1985 and 1986, was considerably less than the peak in 1983 and also the perennial persistence of the problem of administrative salaries eating up a considerable part of the grant. It is surprising, under these circumstances, that the AC was still willing to award grants to the MAI.

Table 6.6. AC Grants to the MAI and MAI Salaries (1983-1986)

Year	Number of Regional Concerts	AC Grant (excluding SRS grant) £	Salaries £
1983	49	36,350	34,533
1984	30 ⁷²⁸	42,000	38,000
1985	12	36,500	27,535
1986	5	11,300	10,921

Source: Data derived from *MAI Annual Reports (1978-1984)*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, various boxes.

From 1985, official disenchantment with the MAI and its operations reached a climax.

6.9 Music networking

In October 1985, the AC, arts administrators and regional music promoters (including the MAI), convened a seminar on regional concert promotion to discuss how best to improve concert activity outside Dublin, the possibility of establishing a centre to provide information on venues, artists etc., as well as the possibilities for improving the music education system and networking between organisations. An important outcome of the seminar was the establishment of Music Network by the AC in 1986.⁷²⁹ Its declared primary objective was

... to research more thoroughly the feasibility of concert promotion in terms of promoters, venues and artists, and to promote a season of tours in regional centres where

satisfaction that it “might start such a body themselves.” MAI, MAI Minutes of Meeting on 20 October, 1984, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 43.

⁷²⁸ Country tours and concerts ceased in September 1984, but resumed on a much smaller scale in 1985.

⁷²⁹ Music Network received £31,300 from the AC in 1986 and £45,000 in 1987. MAI received a total of £21,800 in 1986 (including the SRS grant). Robert O’Byrne was appointed first Director of Music Network and, though instituted and funded by the AC, Music Network was treated as an independent client. In its first year, Music Network arranged 28 concerts (four tours in eight venues and each tour commenced with a concert in Dublin), became a limited company and expanded its board. Arts Council, *1986 Arts Council Annual Report* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1987), 24.

there was an existing arts administrator — either a venue manager, or a Regional or County Arts Officer.⁷³⁰

This new organisation competed with MAI's regional network and its success weakened MAI's influence, resulting in a further reduction of funding in 1986. More significantly, however, it marked the beginning of an ideological battle between volunteer and professional organisations. When Michael Dervan enquired from the MAI chairman, Brian Grimson if the establishment of Music Network would make its regional concerts redundant, Grimson denied there was any conflict between the two organisations and insisted that the MAI would service smaller regional venues with no links to Arts Centres.⁷³¹ MAI was clearly 'keeping up appearances' at this time.

Brian Grimson's tenure as chairman of the MAI (1985-1987) was particularly difficult; there was a considerable turnover of Council members,⁷³² internal staff problems and, by 1985, the MAI debt had risen to c.£20,000. Through various fundraising initiatives and endeavours, (such as the choral marathon at Powerscourt Centre, Dublin organised by Cáit Cooper in 1985 and 1986), the debt was impressively reduced to £216 by 1986.⁷³³ Notwithstanding its bleak financial situation, the MAI managed to stage twelve concerts as part of its Concerts and Adult Education Series in 1985.⁷³⁴ However, as a result of a reduced AC grant of £11,300 in 1986, the Association was forced into what Grimson described as "a year of necessary dormancy" or "holding operation."⁷³⁵

Table 6.7 below shows the income generated by the MAI in 1985 and 1986; the sizeable figure for subscriptions and revenue from its fundraising activities in 1985, is worthy of note.

⁷³⁰ Music Network Promotional Pack (1988), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 4.

⁷³¹ Unpublished transcript of an interview between Michael Dervan (in his capacity of editor of *Music Ireland*) and Brian Grimson on 9 September, 1986, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 4.

⁷³² Council members Frank Casey, Martin Adams, Josef Csibi and Geoffrey Spratt resigned during this period.

⁷³³ The financial recovery prompted the Association to overturn a decision made at a Council meeting on 21 April, 1986 to set up an independent company to manage the SRS. Letter from Brian Grimson to Council Members on 26 April, 1986, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15.

⁷³⁴ These concerts were given by the Brass Ensemble of RESO, David O'Rourke Quartet, Pádraig O'Rourke, Eroica String Trio, Leonora Carney, Constantin Zanidache, John Gibson and the Irish String Trio in Clifden, Westport, Tralee, Carlow, Monaghan and Kilrush. Three Adult Education recitals were also organised in October and November 1985 by the Roscommon VEC.

⁷³⁵ Unpublished interview by Michael Dervan with Brian Grimson on 9 September, 1986, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 4, 1.

Table 6.7. MAI Income 1985 - 1986

Income	1985 £	1986 £
Arts Council Grant (including SRS grant)	35,500	11,300
Shaw Trust	1,090	-
European Music Year	-	300
Subscriptions	8,643	3,231
Donations	609	20
Investment income	110	44
Fundraising activities	7,058	4,227
SRS: DoE	13,000	13,000
Arts Council	7,500	10,500
Fees from Schools	15,540	13,326

Source: Data derived from MAI Annual Reports (1985 and 1986), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 23.

Table 6.7 shows that, in 1986, despite a large deficit and a reduced AC grant, the MAI was capable of resolving its financial affairs when forced to do so, generating income from other sources and instituting cut backs where necessary.⁷³⁶ Though this was a commendable feat, it was too late to convince the AC, which had clearly become impatient with MAI's continued failure to comply with its policy demands.

In an attempt to address the increasingly strained relations between the MAI and the AC in the aftermath of a drastic reduction in its funding for 1986, Grimson attended a meeting with Patricia Quinn (AC Music Officer) and Martin Drury (AC Education Officer) on 6 May, 1986. At this meeting, Grimson explained the MAI's decision not to establish the SRS as a separate company.⁷³⁷ Expressing disappointment, the AC was clear in its view that funding of £10,500 for

⁷³⁶ It should be pointed out that MAI activities were considerably curtailed during 1985 and 1986 and expenses and outgoings were reduced as a consequence.

⁷³⁷ The level of debt accumulated by the MAI had become alarming by 1985; *Soundpost* owed c.£3000 to its creditors and Grimson received legal advice on the matter from Basil Holland of Whitney Moore and Keller Solicitors, 46 Kildare Street. The notion of claims of fraudulent trading was discussed at MAI meetings during the

the SRS in 1986 had been awarded on this basis, though this was not a stated precondition.⁷³⁸ Differentiating between the function of Music Network and the MAI, the AC stated that it grant aided Music Network to service professional promoters, whereas the MAI was a “provider of services to amateur promoters.”⁷³⁹

In my view, another revealing insight into the AC’s reasons for reducing funding to the MAI was the perceived weakness of its structure (an issue which surfaced regularly from the early 1980s). From the beginning, MAI policy was framed, dictated and controlled by a voluntary Council (led by a chairman), but no Chief Executive Officer was responsible and accountable for day-to-day operations and financial control. Though it had succeeded in turning around its finances, it was evident that the MAI could not change the minds of those responsible for allocating AC grants and, in this respect, the meeting on 6 May, 1986 was a major disappointment. Openness, accountability and transparency, the real features of a modern management and successful organisation, were not in evidence in either MAI structures or approaches. Resistance to change and reform eventually led to entrenched positions and, with depleting membership due to increased resignations (Council and rank and file members not renewing their membership), the Association’s credibility waned and its *modus operandi* became questionable. Essentially, when the AC realised that the MAI would or could not transform itself into a professional concert promoting agency, it gradually withdrew its funding. In these circumstances, the MAI could only organise concerts for minor venues and its funding (considerably reduced) was awarded for the SRS only.

6.10 Schools Recitals Scheme

In the mid 1980s when the SRS became the central focus of the Association, attempts were made to expand and diversify the scheme so that it could distinguish itself from other music education projects. The *Music Workshop Scheme*, launched in 1986, allowed secondary schools chose from a list of commissioned works by Irish composers, John Buckley, Gerard Victory,

year and, in the event of liquidation, Holland recommended the MAI to establish the SRS as a separate company. MAI, MAI Minutes of Meeting on 8 May, 1985, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 1.

⁷³⁸ The funding received from the AC for the SRS in 1986 represented an increase of £3,500 on 1985.

⁷³⁹ Summary of meeting between Brian Grimson, Patricia Quinn and Martin Drury of the AC on 6 May, 1986. Drury pledged to attend future MAI Council meetings to improve communication between MAI and the AC, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 15.

Seóirse Bodley, Denise Kelly and Philip Martin and perform at one-day workshops by students, professional musicians and often in the presence of the composer. These compositions were to allow

... participation of any kind by the students ranging from very simple percussion to the metre of the music to more detailed effects where the instruments, resources and talent are available.⁷⁴⁰

A second SRS initiative, *Introduction to Traditional Irish Music in Schools: Bringing the Arts to Schools*, was launched in 1987 with funding from the AC. This project consisted of three workshops/demonstrations, namely:

1. uilleann pipes, flute and tin whistle
2. fiddle and harp
3. concertina, melodeon and accordion.

Its aim was to “spread the love of our traditional native music and provide enjoyment for the students” with a particular emphasis on participation rather than technical ability.⁷⁴¹ This was the first significant inclusion of traditional music by the MAI in its programming, indicating a major departure for the Association and, for the first time, recognition of musical genres other than art music. In this, the MAI was responding to a national shift in thinking, initially instigated by the AC from the end of the 1970s, whereby the “centrality of music education in cultural development was acknowledged officially”.⁷⁴² This embraced traditional Irish as well as European art musical genres. It was done for very good social reasons because, as McCarthy pointed out, music at this time became linked with

... the promotion of peace and tolerance among people in all parts of the island, the formation of an Irish musical identity within the consort of the EU, and the right of every young person to have access to Irish traditional music, a vital part of [their] heritage.⁷⁴³

⁷⁴⁰ MAI, *MAI Music Workshop Scheme* pamphlet 1989/1990, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 23.

⁷⁴¹ Copy of letter sent by the MAI to schools in 1987 entitled “Introduction to Traditional Irish Music in Schools: Bringing the Arts to Schools,” IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 23.

⁷⁴² McCarthy, *Passing It On*, 171.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, 171-172.

In understanding this initiative, the MAI, although previously slow to adapt to these national and musical imperatives, eventually broadened the scope of its SRS to include music from various traditional genres. Apart from Irish music, the Romanian Folk Group (under the direction of Mircea Petcu) performed at SRS concerts and introduced students to ethnic music from Romania.⁷⁴⁴

From 1987, the SRS was the only area of MAI activity funded by the AC.⁷⁴⁵ Consequently, MAI was effectively removed from concert promoting activity and entered exclusively into the area of providing music recitals and workshops for schools. Appendix N lists the annual grants from the AC and DoE to the MAI's SRS from 1985 to 2003 but also pertinent to this discussion is the inverse ratio funding given to Music Network (see Appendix O). The very significant annual increase in funding to Music Network highlights the grim change in AC's attitude to the MAI and the difficulty it faced in carving out a niche for itself within an ever-expanding arts industry. However, Music Network was only one of a growing number of arts organisations and initiatives with which MAI was forced to compete during this period. The most significant of these was the AC's arts-in-school initiative,⁷⁴⁶ the Music Awareness Agency,⁷⁴⁷ which also organised traditional workshops in schools and *The Irish Times* Music in the Classroom series (1989).⁷⁴⁸ MAI did not have a unique voice in the area of arts education and was battling with other agencies to carve out an identity for itself in a rapidly changing social and cultural climate. Ireland had entered a new phase wherein arts education policy was targeted equally at communities as well as schools, and cultural horizons were "broadened to embrace a more global view of and participation in music".⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁴ The Romanian Folk Group consisted of 2 violins, cello, double bass, accordion, timbale, pan pipes, ceval, taragot and other instruments.

⁷⁴⁵ In 1987, MAI was also in receipt of £7,000 from the DoE.

⁷⁴⁶ In 1986, the AC introduced a number of schemes as part of its arts-in-school initiative such as, the Arts Education Projects scheme which promoted long-term co-operation with artists and schools in the areas of composition, drama, ceramics and sculpture.

⁷⁴⁷ The Music Awareness Agency ran a pilot project in sixteen primary schools and was funded by the AC.

⁷⁴⁸ Music in the Classroom was devised and conducted by Gearóid Grant and introduced mainly primary school children to concerts of orchestral music throughout the country (under the aegis of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra or the RTÉ Concert Orchestra). For further information on the series see <http://musicinthe classroom.ie> (accessed 15 November, 2011).

⁷⁴⁹ McCarthy, *Passing It On*, 170.

Two important government initiatives, namely, the establishment of the National Lottery, *An Crannchur Náisiúnta*,⁷⁵⁰ and the Government's first White Paper on cultural policy, *Access and Opportunity* (January 1987)⁷⁵¹ impacted on arts in Ireland at this time. The White Paper reaffirmed the AC's role in the cultural life of Ireland and the Government's support of it "to continue to develop dynamic policies for the development of the arts."⁷⁵² It proposed to extend cultural opportunities, "improve access to culture", and increase "participation in cultural activity."⁷⁵³ On foot of this encouraging document, access became a hallmark of AC arts education policy. The White Paper anticipated doubling the AC's funding by 1990, mainly through the National Lottery; however, this did not materialise. There was no response from the MAI to the White Paper, which was surprising, as it contained proposals particularly relevant to its activities. In general, apart from the folk music initiatives, the Association was slow to react to changes in arts education at this time; the issue of funding appears to have been a more pressing concern.

6.11 Conclusions

The late 1970s and early 1980s emerged as one of the most exciting, yet difficult, periods in the history of the MAI. Pioneering developments in the arts in Ireland from the 1970s, including the introduction of the second Arts Act (1973) and the restructuring of the AC in 1973, led to unprecedented expansion in access to, and funding of, the arts.⁷⁵⁴

Official policy towards the arts had finally emerged from general indifference and, at times, outright hostility, to an acceptance of the essential role of the arts as an important civilising influence in Irish society.⁷⁵⁵

In this chapter, I have discussed various MAI activities and involvements over two decades that were arguably the most opportune for the Association. The history of the Association over this period is largely dominated by its relationship with the AC. That

⁷⁵⁰ The National Lottery Act, 1986 introduced the National Lottery and operations began on 23 March, 1987. Proceeds from the National Lottery have funded cultural and arts projects such as the Wexford Festival Opera and the Clifden Arts Festival, Galway. For further information on the National Lottery see <http://lottery.ie> (accessed 20 December, 2011).

⁷⁵¹ Fine Gael/Labour Government commissioned this White Paper.

⁷⁵² Arts Council, *Access and Opportunity: A White Paper on Cultural Policy* (Arts Council: Dublin, 1987), 21.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷⁵⁴ Government funding of the AC increased from £2,340,000 in 1979 to £5,936,000 in 1986.

⁷⁵⁵ Kennedy, *Dreams and Responsibilities*, 207.

relationship was one of great trust until the mid 1980s when, for significant reasons, the MAI found it was unable to cope with the pace of change. In its formative years, it functioned mainly as an agent of music advocacy and its structures were largely developed to suit that need. During the mid 1970s, it responded courageously to other needs, e.g. concert promotion, the SRS scheme, the IYO, magazine publishing etc., tasks that were professional in nature and that required a level and variety of expertise that was not possible within its original structure. Throughout this time, the AC was increasing its funding to the MAI because it perceived its volunteer and altruistic membership as a value to be harnessed to its own particular ends. At the same time, the MAI came under pressure to reform its structure to take account of the more professional involvements that attached to its remit during this period. One could argue that this expectation was unfair given the nature and original purpose of the Association. However, one could also come to a contrary assessment of this period of MAI's history and conclude that the AC presented the Association with considerable opportunities and funding to adapt its structures and its activities to the more relevant needs of the day, by its refusal to conform and reform, the Association presented itself as unworthy of the trust placed in it by the AC. Needless to say the Archive reveals very little of the internal debate and divisions which must have accompanied the proponents of both these positions although, in this chapter, I have presented some evidence of this. In circumstances where clear division emerges among a body of strong characters, it becomes possible to understand why, on the one hand, the AC demanded a CEO-type structure overseen by a sub-committee of the MAI council and, on the other, the failure to enact any change due to the strength of feeling expressed on both sides of the argument. Because it was the latter view that prevailed, nothing happened and the MAI found itself administering large amounts of AC funding over a variety of professional involvements without the appropriate professional expertise to do so in a transparent and accountable manner. This, as I have shown, had disastrous results for the Association and ultimately led to a total loss of its influence, its funding and its membership.

However, the MAI did, in its SRS, show some willingness to compromise its values and respond to the changing needs of the time. It clearly understood the ramifications of refusing to broaden the range of musical genres within the SRS. In acceding to AC wishes to adopt a more pluralist engagement with music, one that embraced both classical as well as folk genres, it was

not only allowing for greater accessibility to music but also serving the wider aim of contributing to social tolerance. It should also be noted that in Ireland, as elsewhere at this time music curricula were adopting a more inclusive as opposed to an elitist stance. This was in keeping with a wider movement for a greater democratisation of the arts and when, in 1982, the government appointed Ted Nealon as Minister of State for Arts and Culture⁷⁵⁶ and was giving expression to its wish to do just that. In acceding to the AC wish to get involved in the promotion of folk music, the MAI, for the first time in its history, demonstrated a willingness to embrace musical traditions beyond the boundary of classical art music, but it was also responding to educational vogue and relevance in the hope of ensuring public funding for its SRS into the future.

Associations and organisations invariably die out after a certain period of time unless they can revive and re-focus the energy, vitality and commitment of their members. With a serious decline in AC funding and the establishment of new professional arts organisations, the MAI lost enthusiasm and relevance. Music critic, Michael Dervan, observed that the difficulties faced by the MAI in the aftermath of the withdrawal of funding would formerly “have had major repercussions within the musical world”; however, the gradual shedding of activities was symptomatic of the fortunes of the Association for some time.⁷⁵⁷ In fact, he conjectured why the withdrawal of AC funding had taken so long, considering the MAI’s power and purpose had gradually been usurped.

⁷⁵⁶ Ted Nealon (1929 -), Fine Gael T.D. (1981- 1997), served as Minister of State at the Departments of Agriculture, Taoiseach (with responsibility for Arts and Culture) and Posts and Telegraphs.

⁷⁵⁷ “Musical Highs and Lows of 1986,” *The Irish Times*, 1 January, 1987.

Chapter 7

The Twilight Years of the MAI

7.1 Introduction

This chapter relates the story of the final years of the Association (1990-2007) and evaluates the causes of its demise and re-emergence in 2007 as the Friends of Classical Music. Throughout the 1990s, the two main activities of the MAI were the SRS and administration of a FÁS Community Employment Scheme (1992-2003);⁷⁵⁸ it also organised the European Union Youth Orchestra auditions and published the *MAI Music Diary* (from October, 1992).⁷⁵⁹ At this time (early 1990s), its one full-time member of staff, Eilish MacGabhann, was supported by two FÁS employees on a part-time basis.⁷⁶⁰ With its staff and activities seriously curtailed, the future of the MAI was bleak; a growing number of new state-funded organisations, undertaking functions that were previously the preserve of the MAI, indicated a dangerous turn of events for the future of the Association. However, 1994 proved to be a significant year holding out some hope of revival. In that year, FÁS provided the Association with up to fifteen part-time trainees under the supervision of a full-time supervisor as part of its Community Employment Scheme. This offered the Association “the opportunity of reassessing its position,” augmenting its activities, diversifying, and finding new direction. For the first time in its history, the MAI had found a reliable source of funding, other than the AC. The dramatic increase in the number of FÁS employees injected the MAI with a new buoyancy and, with renewed hope, it applied to the AC for funding for new projects. On foot of this, the AC requested the Association to outline its long-term plans for the 1990s.

Defining a new role for itself was not easy for an association like the MAI. Whilst its traditional view of itself was entrenched in the original vision of its founding members, successive Councils and the general membership had difficulty in defining functions beyond the parameters of those activities associated with its former status. Nonetheless, the AC had held out some hope of a new future and the MAI realised that it needed to approach the

⁷⁵⁸ FÁS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair), the Irish Government’s training and employment authority was established in 1988 under the Labour Services Act (1987). For further information on FÁS see <http://www.fas.ie> (accessed 4 June, 2011).

⁷⁵⁹ The *MAI Music Diary* continued the MAI’s long history in the field of monthly newsletters such as the *Monthly Bulletin*, *Counterpoint* and *Soundpost*. It was launched and sponsored by McCullough Pigott’s and Elo Press and was available free of charge to members, schools of music, music shops and arts organisations nationwide with an estimated readership of 5,000. MAI, 1992 *MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 36, 5.

⁷⁶⁰ The FÁS employees were Michael Hanson and Greta Morris. IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 28.

challenge with its customary zeal and passion if it was to have any prospect of continuing its work with official recognition and funding. Rather than respond with a single well-honed and focused document, the Association provided three separate documents:

The Music Association of Ireland: A Role for the 1990s (1989),

Three Year Plan for the Arts in Ireland (1994),

Development Plan of the Music Association of Ireland (1994).

7.2 The Music Association of Ireland: A Role for the 1990s (1989)

MAI expressed its vision for the future and articulated its concern about music in schools in its policy document, *The Music Association of Ireland: A Role for the 1990s*. This document denounced rumours of the Association's demise and re-iterated its intention to continue its mission of promoting music in Ireland while adapting to societal changes.

The Council noted with regret that a view circulated widely to the effect that the MAI was to close with the resignation of a significant number of those who served on the last Council. The Council wishes to affirm its commitment to ensuring that an organization which has served the cause of music in Ireland with the greatest distinction at times during the last three decades is not only alive, but both willing and able to play an appropriate role in our changing society.⁷⁶¹

However, an examination of the MAI's 1989 list of activities in the document reveals a markedly different organisation to that at the beginning of the 1980s. *A Role for the 1990s* lists these as:

- recitals in schools funded by AC / DoE / participating schools
- workshops in schools funded by AC / IMRO / participating schools
- a chamber music residential course funded by Carnegie Trust UK / participants
- Varming Prize competition funded by Varming Mulcahy Ltd.
- ECYO auditions funded by the EEC Office / Department of Foreign Affairs
- recitals and concerts funded by Forás Éireann / box office receipts

With the exception of the organisation of recitals/concerts, this list bears little resemblance to the original objectives of the MAI indicating the extent to which its activities were curtailed at this time. Further, the ailing Association presents a list of its assets as being, "a particularly

⁷⁶¹ MAI, *The Music Association of Ireland: A Role for the 1990s*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 25, 6.

loyal membership, a city-centre public office location in the country's largest music shop and an experienced and dedicated member of staff.”⁷⁶² For an organisation trying to compete with heavily subsidised, professional arts organisations, these assets do not greatly impress. The MAI had always acknowledged its loyal membership; however, at no stage was it numerically adequate to cover office overheads or any other expenses.⁷⁶³ In any event, what had the MAI to offer potential members at this time? Membership perks, such as priority booking for concerts, were no longer appealing to concert-goers as other agencies were promoting more important concerts and the number and standard of MAI concerts had reduced significantly. I believe MAI members largely paid their subscriptions out of personal loyalty to the Association. More importantly, Music Network and the CMC did not depend on membership subscriptions to cover any of their costs and, consequently, did not have to attend to such matters.⁷⁶⁴

Educational concerns dominate *A Role for the 1990s*, including:

- the lack of music education in boys' schools
- the shortage of music teachers in rural areas, the midlands and the north and west of Ireland
- the phasing out of music on the curriculum
- high achieving students being discouraged from taking music as an academic subject
- the need for more qualified inspectors with special responsibility for music
- scholarships for primary and secondary school students from rural areas to study music at third level
- the provision of in-service courses in music education for primary and secondary teachers
- funding for school instrumental ensembles and equipment
- V.A.T. be removed from the sale of musical instruments.⁷⁶⁵

In including many of these on its list of concerns, the MAI demonstrated the extent to which it was replicating an earlier vision. By the early 1990s, these concerns were in the process of being addressed by other agencies like the National Council for Curriculum and

⁷⁶² Ibid., 1.

⁷⁶³ For example, in 1986 office expenses totalled £6,792 (excluding general expenses of £2,183 and salaries of £10,921) whilst membership (including donations) was £3,251. MAI, *1986 MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 25.

⁷⁶⁴ MAI had successfully organised various fundraising efforts and a membership drive in 1985 and 1986. However, a diminishing voluntary committee could not sustain such a level of commitment and, as a result, donors and subscriptions decreased in subsequent years.

⁷⁶⁵ MAI, *The Music Association of Ireland: A Role for the 1990s*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 25, 3-5.

Assessment (NCCA), or were clearly impossible to realise unless funded independently of the state. The NCCA had always liaised with the AC in matters pertaining to arts education. However, as the AC's primary purpose was the development of the performing arts in Irish society, it did not always articulate arts education policy in ways that were consistent with the particular circumstances of classroom music, although it was aware of current events in Irish arts curriculum development. Pre-empting this need, the AC would have been happy to mandate the MAI to undertake this task. As early as 1989, it suggested that the MAI employ an Education Officer for the purposes of investigating music education in Ireland "with a particular emphasis on international curriculum design."⁷⁶⁶ This was an important AC initiative aimed at supplying clear lines of communication between the MAI, AC, DoE and NCCA with the specific objective of influencing the debate on an appropriate music curriculum for Irish schools. The NCCA, because of a requirement to liaise with stakeholders, was not opposed to this idea. However, there is no record of any meeting in the Archive, although the NCCA and the DoE did agree to provide personnel to participate in meetings with the MAI Education Officer. We do not know the outcome of the Education Officer's work, but as the MAI did not have a good track record in responding actively to its own research, one can presume that the work of the Education Officer fell foul of MAI's internal division. By 1994, an NCCA report on the provision of arts education in primary education was published without any input from the MAI. It included important issues relating to creativity, accessibility and increased participation in arts education as well as addressing some of the specific concerns identified in the MAI document *A Role for the 1990s*. Once again, an MAI opportunity to carve out some distinctive niche for itself was lost.

Nevertheless, the AC did respond positively to MAI's *A Role for the 1990s* and rewarded its attempts to provide a more professional education service by increasing its grant by £4,000 to £18,000 in 1990. This allowed the MAI to increase payments to artists taking part in the SRS, having previously claimed that artists' fees were inadequate.⁷⁶⁷ Had the additional finances been used to extend the SRS or to enhance presentations by including the participation of a music education specialist, this would have been worthwhile. By simply increasing payments to performers, the MAI displayed a remarkable lack of accountability.

⁷⁶⁶ Copy of letter from MAI to Adrian Munnelly, AC director on 15 July, 1989, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40. At the request of Adrian Munnelly, and Education Officer, Martin Drury, a steering committee comprising of representatives of the DoE and the NCCA was established to support the work of the Research Officer.

⁷⁶⁷ As a result of increased AC funding, SRS fees and daily subsistence were increased by 10%, overnight subsistence by 50% and travel allowance by 25%. MAI, *1990 MAI Annual Report*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 23.

However, it is the MAI's ineffectual vision of itself and its aspirations for the 1990s that is particularly disappointing. In reading the document, one is aware of the MAI looking around at what other agencies were doing and including those within its own wish list. The document makes no attempt to state a unique strength or to target initiatives that it was particularly well positioned to service. In fact it espouses only two roles, i.e. articulating a view of music education that was, at the time, self-evident and in process of change, and an administrative role devoted to expending and disbursing AC funding for a limited number of projects.

7.3 *Three Year Plan for the Arts in Ireland (1994)*

The second document, outlining the MAI's long-term plans entitled, the *Three Year Plan for the Arts in Ireland*, was submitted to the AC in February, 1994. The *Three Year Plan*, like its predecessor, is a disappointing policy document. It highlighted concerns regarding the position of music education and the arts in Ireland at the time, but its recommendations to ameliorate the situation were scant and lacked imagination. The Plan called for:

- funding to the Arts Council, and therefore its beneficiary organisations to be secured
- clarification regarding funding where more than one sponsor is involved
- an administrative support structure provided by the Arts Council for small organisations
- the SRS be extended to be available to all second level, primary and special schools
- a major research report to be undertaken by the Arts Council to ascertain the level of the arts provided in second level schools. This information to be used to lobby the Department of Education for improvements in the status of the arts in schools
- the development of a good working relationship between the Arts Council and the Department of Education
- extensive development of arts in the community⁷⁶⁸

In acknowledging the AC's support over many years, it criticised the government's uncertain year-to-year funding of the AC which, in turn, adversely affected the funding of music and other arts organisations. This is what caused MAI's inability to plan successful medium to long-term projects, a common problem among many, if not the vast majority, of not-for-profit organisations. Freda Donoghue noted that "the *ad hoc* nature of funding arrangements"

⁷⁶⁸ MAI, *Three Year Plan for the Arts in Ireland*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 25, 1.

implies that “voluntary groups are rarely sure of their allocations *ex ante*, thereby making long term planning very difficult”.⁷⁶⁹ The central truth that “even altruism needs resources to thrive”⁷⁷⁰ explains why many of these long-term visionary documents demanded by funding organisations can never be sustained.⁷⁷¹ Because of this, it is wise for voluntary organisations to continually investigate mixed sources of revenue, corporate or individual donors, and to prepare policy documents even if they will never materialise or lead to worthwhile success.⁷⁷² In the case of the MAI, the situation is complicated by additional factors; MAI’s precarious funding situation was, in major part, a result of unwise management of the finances under its control and not government’s uncertain funding of the AC. During this period, medium to long-term planning had not been a priority for the MAI because all of its efforts were concentrated on day-to-day survival. It must have been manifestly clear to both AC and interested government agencies that MAI’s *Three Year Plan* had little to recommend it, since it provided no evidence of practical value. In its analysis of the situation at that time, the Plan focused on what needed attention and, by implication, suggested recommendations without targeting specific actions that it could undertake; nor, for that matter, had the Plan outlined any rationale why the MAI was best placed, because of its particular knowledge, skills and professional endeavours, to respond to the identified needs. What the *Three Year Plan* totally fails to take account of is that, in the view of public bodies like the AC and other agencies of the State, the MAI was, as its name suggests, a provider of specific services to music. Had it responded more decisively with specifically targeted actions, it would have inspired greater confidence in the Association’s ability. However, a plan, which could not articulate any justification for its own proposals, or any practical means of realising those in a transparent and accountable manner, was never likely to impress, especially in view of its previous track record.

⁷⁶⁹ Freda Donoghue, “Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Ireland,” *Working Papers of the John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project* 28, eds., Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies, 1998), 17.

⁷⁷⁰ Diane Leat, Sue Tester and Judith Unell, eds., *A Price Worth Paying? A Study of the Effects of Government Grant Aid to Voluntary Organisations* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1986), 140.

⁷⁷¹ Donoghue, “Defining the nonprofit sector,” 22.

⁷⁷² Treasa Hayes, “Perspectives on Funding in the Irish Voluntary Sector: Theory and Practice,” *DCU Business School Research Paper Series* 37 (March 1999), 7.

7.4 *Development Plan of the Music Association of Ireland (1994)*

The final substantial MAI plan of the 1990s was the *Development Plan of the Music Association of Ireland* (August, 1994) compiled by Cathal O'Donoghue.⁷⁷³ Unlike the MAI's aforementioned policy document, this Plan was a more comprehensive assessment of what the MAI represented in 1994, its plans for the future and its five major aims which it stated were to:

- further music appreciation
- ensure greater access to music for all
- secure funding
- increase membership and
- re-structure FÁS staff

The first two aims were, at this time, being addressed by the NCCA and, in specifically claiming them as within its remit, the MAI may have been naively attempting to exert an influence over the process of curriculum development, although none of its personnel could claim particular specialist knowledge or qualification in this area. But since its *Development Plan* described the Association as “a music pressure group”⁷⁷⁴, it is more likely that it was acting in that capacity. This would have been a reasonable expectation since the NCCA was expected to consult widely in pursuit of its goals. However, the evidence is that, during the 1990s, with an inflated view of itself and its abilities, the MAI had exaggerated its own activities/role in the *Development Plan* and, in fact, had not engaged actively with the NCCA at this time.

O'Donoghue's document supplies some insight into this and explains the reasons for MAI's reduced artistic activity, attributing its inability to develop its endeavours and staff to its financial standing. “The lack of financial resources put pressure on MAI's ability to carry out day-to-day activities, without even contemplating the possibility of undertaking any new ventures.”⁷⁷⁵ Without funding, basic MAI administration could not continue and, more worryingly, new activities could not be undertaken. It suggests an inability to manage existing funds, to seek alternative revenue and, ultimately, it reveals an organisation in acute

⁷⁷³ In 1994, Cathal O'Donoghue was studying for an MA in Economics at University College, Dublin and had a background in mathematics and statistics.

⁷⁷⁴ Cathal O'Donoghue, *Development Plan of the Music Association of Ireland* (1994), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 25,

2.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

need. In this state, how could the MAI compete with other arts organisations or return to its former glory days. The hiring of extra staff or securing of additional funding, would not have revived the MAI at this time where there were only two realistic options: radical reform or abolition.

Another area alluded to in the 1994 *Development Plan* was the oft-mentioned issue of membership. MAI believed that this was a crucial issue for the Association and the document suggested various methods of enticing new members, such as free or subsidised lunchtime recitals.⁷⁷⁶ This too was an overstatement, since the MAI had little to offer new or current members. It no longer commanded the influence of earlier years and patrons, who wished to attend concerts and no longer required MAI membership to secure priority seats. Notwithstanding this, the *Development Plan* bravely mooted the establishment of a combined association of music organisations; professional organisations, such as Music Network, would pool resources with semi-professional/voluntary organisations such as the MAI. In the *Development Plan*, it envisaged itself as the leading voluntary organisation within a combined association of music organisations under the aegis of Music Network (see fig. 23).⁷⁷⁷

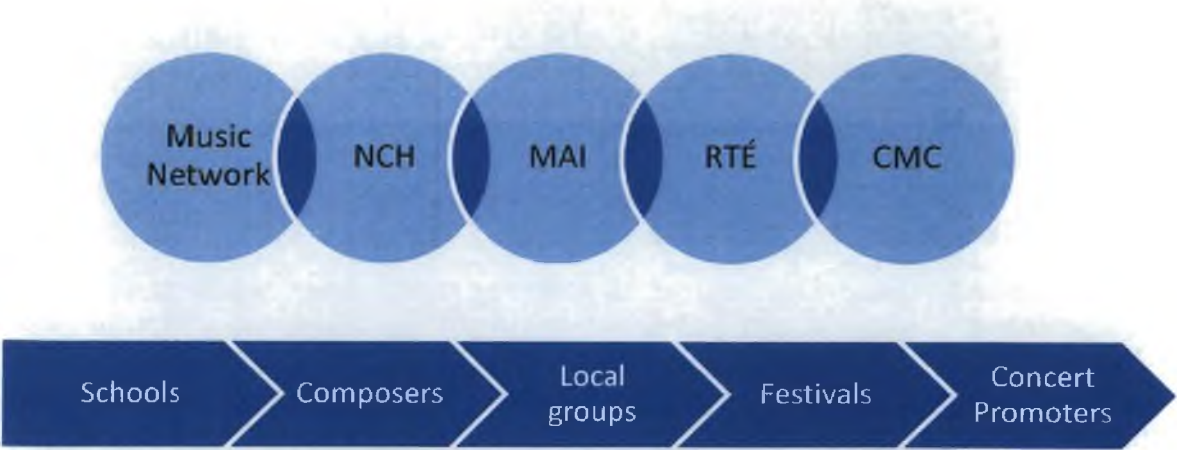


Figure 23. MAI’s Development Plan and the Proposed Combined Association of Music Organisations.

This radical suggestion could never have come to pass, given the fundamental differences in the strengths and significances of the suggested organisations and, once again, the proposal exhibited a degree of *naïveté* on the part of its author. Given the Association’s voluntary and amateur status and the poor state of its finances, the proposal demonstrated both ‘bravado’

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., 3.
⁷⁷⁷ Ibid. Figure 23 is my model of the MAI’s Development Plan and the Proposed Combined Association of Music Organisations.

and a measure of desperation because it must have been clear to all concerned that it was both unrealisable, as well as unrealistic.

The final area discussed in the Plan was the subject of staffing re-structure, an issue which had caused much controversy during the 1980s, but, in the 1990s, the MAI had the support of FÁS to follow through on its recommendation. The *Development Plan* proposed positions for fifteen part-time FÁS employees including, secretary, assistant secretary, membership administrator (2), assistant treasurer/bookkeeper, ECYO organiser, assistant editor (MAI Diary), advertising trainee (MAI Diary), SRS Primary schools administrator, festivals researcher, famine commemoration organiser, recitals organiser, ensemble co-ordinator, trainee journalist/PRO and an adult education officer.⁷⁷⁸ This was an ambitious proposal; if it appeared unrealistic because of its scale, it did have merit because, at this time, it was concordant with a national need to provide training opportunities to jobseekers. Had the increased staff numbers and structure (under the control of a full-time supervisor) been sanctioned by FÁS and implemented by the MAI, it could have allowed the Association to recover, rather than try unsuccessfully to compete with other professional and better resourced music agencies. However, the *Development Plan*, in its enthusiasm for what was possible rather than viable given MAI's track record, clearly overestimated requirements, and the number of FÁS workers approved was in the end considerably less than what was envisioned. The scheme approved by FÁS provided for three part-time administrative staff, one full-time supervisor, and five or six amateur musicians with the opportunity to perform at venues such as old folks' homes and special needs schools. A criticism of the scheme was that it did not support the young musicians in developing their skills and progressing their musical careers as professionals.

7.5 MAI responses to national initiatives

Apart from the FÁS proposal, all three plans produced by the Association between 1989 and 1994 showed a lack of institutional awareness of existing initiatives at national level and of contemporary trends and issues. This lack of self-awareness, symptomatic of the MAI story from the 1980s onwards, singularly failed to impress the AC. In fulfilling AC requests to prepare plans of this type, the MAI had failed to provide a comprehensive and realistic view of itself and its own future, and this resulted in the withholding of funding. All

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., 10-12. The MAI envisaged that these positions would attract young musicians who, having spent twelve months on unemployment benefit, would gain valuable experience in arts administration.

three documents were unconvincing in spite of the perceived merit with the FÁS proposal and, as a consequence, they failed to attract additional funding.

At this time, MAI responses to other national initiatives also disappointed. Apart from a two and half page response by MAI chairperson, Marion Doherty,⁷⁷⁹ to a scant reference to the arts in the government's Green Paper, *Education for a Changing World* (1992)⁷⁸⁰ and a 'swipe' at Music Network's heavily subsidised concerts and its policy document, *A Vision of the Future* (1992), the MAI did not contribute to the national debate on the burgeoning area of music education.⁷⁸¹ This was particularly evident in the MAI's absence from the many discussions on music education which peaked with the Music Education National Debate (MEND; 1994-1996)⁷⁸² and the Provision and Institutional Arrangements Now for Orchestras and Ensembles (PIANO; 1996) reports.⁷⁸³ These deliberations attempted to bring the topic of music education to the fore in Ireland and echoed the objectives of the MAI policy outlined in its Memorandum: *Music and the Nation* (1949) and restated in *A Role for the 1990s*. This failure to engage in the music education debate further isolated the MAI from contemporary developments in arts education policy. In doing so, the MAI's long-standing commitment to music education in Ireland came into question. From the mid 1990s onwards there was a

⁷⁷⁹ In Marion Doherty's *Response to the Green Paper on Education*, she voiced her disgust at the complete disregard for the arts in the document, describing it as "a scandalous omission". IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 35. The MAI was not alone in its criticism of the Green Paper. Michael D. Higgins, then Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, described the omission of the arts in the Green Paper as "unsatisfactory and deficient" and claimed that the document upheld science and technology, languages and business studies as more worthy of study and investment. Minister for Arts, Culture and Gaeltacht, Michael D. Higgins, *Dáil Éireann - Volume 429*, 29 April, 1993. <http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/0429/D.0429.199304290024.html> (accessed 16 December, 2011).

⁷⁸⁰ An Roinn Oideachais, *Education for a Changing World: Green Paper on Education* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1992).

⁷⁸¹ The MAI accused Music Network of usurping its activities and claimed Music Network could not continue without substantial funding from the AC. MAI, *Minutes of Meeting* on 8 November, 1992, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 33.

⁷⁸² The MEND Report was published in three phases; April 1995, November 1995 and November 1996. It was sponsored by the Dublin Institute of Technology with Frank Heneghan as its Director. It promoted an eight point agenda; philosophies of music education, the current state of music education in Ireland, continuum in music education, performance in music education, assessment in music education, national culture and multiculturalism, third-level music education teacher training and sequel to MEND – a forum for music education. For further information on MEND see <http://www.musicnetwork.ie/content/files/MEND09d.pdf> (accessed 4 June, 2011).

⁷⁸³ The PIANO Report was commissioned by Minister for Arts, Culture and Gaeltacht, Michael D. Higgins and chaired by John O'Connor. PIANO highlighted the vicious circle that can exist when generations of students receive no instruction in music from the beginning of their education to third level. It also mooted the establishment of an Irish Academy of Performing Arts and increased funding for music schools, an idea mentioned in the MAI's Memorandum (1949).

significant growth in music education initiatives nationwide.⁷⁸⁴ The Government's White Paper on Education (1995), *Charting our Education Future*,⁷⁸⁵ signalled a period of considerable expansion for the AC; the MAI's limited funding and a lack of music education specialists to advise on contemporary trends made it increasingly apparent that the MAI was losing control of its remaining area of activity, the SRS. Other organisations had assumed the role of advocacy for music education and were more successful in this endeavour.

7.6 The final years of the MAI (1997-2007)

In 1997, the MAI, in urgent need to redeem itself, launched a new education plan entitled, *Music in Time* series, for primary and secondary school students. The series followed international trends, encompassing a wide range of musical activities and genres and proved a successful venture.⁷⁸⁶ The following year, 1998, marked the MAI's 50th anniversary and the occasion was celebrated with a Gala Concert at the National Concert Hall on 19 October (see figs. 24 and 25).⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸⁴ The Irish Times – Music in the Classroom (1994), *The Arts Plan 1995-1997* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1994), *The Public and the Arts: A Survey of Behaviour and Attitudes in Ireland* (Paula Clancy; Dublin: The Arts Council in association with the Business Research Programme, Graduate Business, University College Dublin, 1994), The FORTE Report: *Access All Areas: Irish Music, An International Industry: Report to the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1996), *Listening Ears? A Report on Private Schools of Music in the Republic of Ireland* (Helen Phelan, unpublished, 1997), *Poverty: Access and Participation in the Arts* (Jeanne Moore; The Arts Council/Combat Poverty Agency, 1997), Music Education National Debate: The M.E.N.D. Report (1995, 1996 and 2001), the Forum for Music in Ireland (1999), *The Arts Plan 1999-2001* (1999) and Music Education Action Group (2000-2002).

⁷⁸⁵ An Roinn Oideachais, *Charting Our Education Future: White Paper on Education* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1995), 21, 48.

⁷⁸⁶ MAI Music Education Officer, Caroline Wynne launched the *Music in Time* series in 1998.

⁷⁸⁷ A 50th Anniversary Dinner was held at the Oak Room, Mansion House, Dublin on 6 March, 1999 with tickets at £25 each.

THE MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND
in association with
The National Concert Hall

50th Anniversary Celebration

The National Concert Hall, Dublin
Saturday 10th October, 1998 at 8 p.m.

Figure 24. 50th Anniversary celebration concert programme (front cover)

Programme

Te Deum in C major HOB XXIIIc:2

JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

Choir & Orchestra

Three Songs –

Chanson Triste

L'invitation au Voyage

HENRI DUPARC (1848-1933)

Bernadette Greevy
& Orchestra

Two Songs –

The Meetings of the Waters

She is far from the Land

THOMAS MOORE (1779-1852)

Bernadette Greevy
& Orchestra

Organ Concerto in F

Allegro moderato

Adagio

Allegro assai

FRANTIŠEK XAVER BRIXI (1732-1771)

Gerard Gillen
& Orchestra

Toccata (from Symphony No. 5 Op. 42/1)

CHARLES-MARIE WIDOR (1844-1937)

Gerard Gillen

Interval

Introduction and Allegro for

String Quartet and

String Orchestra Op. 47

EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934)

Cork School of Music
String Quartet
& Orchestra

Choral Fantasia for Piano Solo,

Chorus and Orchestra, Op. 80

John O'Connor
Choir, Soloists

Figure 25. 50th Anniversary celebration concert programme (p. 9)⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁸ In this concert, Marion Doherty conducted the Enchiriadis Tres Choir and orchestra and Michael D'Arcy led the orchestra. The Cork School of Music String Quartet comprised of Sarah Sexton (violin), Michelle Fleming (violin), John MacCarthy (viola) and Grace MacCarthy (cello). The soloists in *Choral Fantasia for Piano Solo*,

Though 1998 was a year of celebration for the MAI, there was a considerable reduction in its AC grant; funding was reduced from £21,500 in 1997 to £10,000 in 1998 resulting in a seriously curtailed SRS.⁷⁸⁹ In doing so, the AC highlighted the fact that many other organisations were delivering music education initiatives in schools at this time which suggested that the MAI was being squeezed out. Nonetheless, grants of £12,000 per annum were secured from the DoE from 2000 to 2003 which allowed the SRS to continue its work until 2004 when it was discontinued because of a lack of funding. The FÁS Community Employment Scheme was discontinued in 2003, when many FÁS programmes were reduced nationally.⁷⁹⁰ Without AC, DoE and FÁS funding, the MAI could not survive and, with a declining membership, the MAI could no longer command respect.

Friends of Classical Music

With no paid staff or state funding, the MAI returned to an impecunious status, depending on its members, despite little or no return for their subscriptions. Eventually, the MAI dissolved in 2007 and key members of the MAI decided that its interests would be better served under a new title, the Friends of Classical Music (FCM). The Association's days of pioneering advocacy and lobbying were long over but its ideals would be continued by the FCM which described itself as

.... an association of music-lovers who believe that great music is vital for the emotional, psychological and social development of the human person. Classical music and its related forms, opera and ballet, are particularly important in this respect as they are among the greatest achievements of European civilisation.⁷⁹¹

Membership fees are the main source of income for the FCM.⁷⁹² It operates as a voluntary organisation and produces a newsletter which appears two to four times per year, featuring reviews, comments on concerts and other musical events (see Appendix P). FCM's aims are not too dissimilar to the MAI's original objectives:

Chorus and Orchestra, Op. 80 were Michele Sheridan (soprano), Máire Mullarkey (soprano), Linda Gryffudd (mezzo soprano), Robin Tritchler (tenor), Matthew Gilsean (tenor) and Fionnán Ó hAodáin (bass).

⁷⁸⁹ In 1999, the AC's grant to the SRS was £5,000, £6,500 in 2000, £7,500 in 2001, £6,000 in 2002 and £9,000 in 2003.

⁷⁹⁰ The FÁS Community Employment Scheme represents another MAI initiative with promise that did not reach its full potential. With appropriate guidance and supervision, the FÁS musicians could have been trained to a high standard and eventually participate in the SRS which would in turn have reduced artists' fees considerably.

⁷⁹¹ *Friends of Classical Music Brochure* (2007), 2. Personal papers.

⁷⁹² €25 for single members, €40 for couples, €10 for old aged pensioners and €5 for students/unemployed. Ibid.

1. to promote classical music as an essential element in the development of individual and social consciousness
2. to persuade our politicians and educators to adopt a more committed and enlightened attitude to music education and to recognise that a musically literate public is vital for a healthy and sane society
3. to ensure that the Department of Education's primary school music syllabus is taught in every primary school and that a general music course be devised for secondary school pupils who are not studying music for exam purposes
4. to challenge prejudices and misconceptions about classical music
5. to campaign for even greater co-operation between the two parts of the island of Ireland in order to further developments in music education and opportunities for composers.⁷⁹³

These aims are clearly flawed and over-ambitious in several respects, particularly for an ad hoc interest group with negligible funds. Furthermore, some of them are incongruous. One would have to question if, as claimed in the first aim, classical music is essential in the development of individual and social consciousness; also, as is stated in the second, that musical literacy is vital for social health and sanity. The third aspiration had already been a reality since the early 1990s, while the fourth is counter-productive in that it confirms the presence of prejudices and misconceptions as much among those who identify with classical music as it does among the wider society. The vagueness of the fifth aim is also apparent because it does not express with clarity any precise educational development or composer opportunity that might be realised through North-South co-operation; neither does it take cognisance of the fact that such co-operation currently operates under the remit of existing organisations. Collectively, these are defective aspirations, symptomatic of an organisation without any clear sense of direction. When the MAI was founded in 1948, music in Ireland totally lacked supports. However, over sixty years later, the Irish music environment has considerably changed. The AC now ensures that the arts receive substantial state and European Union funding. The arts administration sector has been professionalised and caters for all genres of music and access to music has become a reality in recent national curriculums. Apart from its informative newsletter, FCM is not actively pursuing any of its

⁷⁹³ Ibid., 2-3.

five stated aims; its impact on classical music in Ireland will never match that of its predecessor, the MAI.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

8.1 General conclusions

Forming conclusions about the MAI and its significance in the musical life of the nation over the sixty-year time-span of its existence is not easy. However, a number of general conclusions can be deduced from my study.

The vagaries of state support for the arts over this period played a considerable part in how the Association functioned and, in this one thing emerges as a dominating theme throughout the timeframe of my study. The MAI had come to rely exclusively on state sponsorship for most of its endeavours. One can see how this happened because, in the early years of its existence, much of the effort was concentrated on encouraging the State to accept responsibility for supporting art music. Then, as this began to become a reality and, especially after the formation of the AC and the accompanying legislation for the arts, it became clear that, here in Ireland, the burden of financing the arts could never be the sole responsibility of the State. In these circumstances, the State looked to the voluntary sector to aid this process and one can envisage why, from the mid 1970s, the MAI was perceived as an attractive means of achieving this end. The failure of the MAI in this respect makes grim reading throughout my study, and there are very few occasions where the MAI had moved beyond requesting state support for its ventures. Had it done so and demonstrated an ability to match state funding with funding generated from its own and philanthropic sources, it would have shown enterprise and value and inspired greater trust and confidence in its endeavours.

A second theme arising from my study is MAI's over-reliance on a small number of dedicated, if amateur, administrators and musical enthusiasts. This was obvious throughout its entire history. Its founding members were strong and persuasive characters with very clear, if sometimes opposing, views about the direction and objectives of the Association. Boydell, McMullin, Fleischmann and their associates were powerful orators and lobbyists in their own right and imprinted on the Association a *modus operandi* that was true to character. The early Association relied for direction on its strength of opinion and clarity of expression, and one can see how, as time progressed and new challenges emerged, different qualities and diplomatic approaches might have provided better outcomes. The one exception to this general trend was Olive Smith who, although strong in character and conviction, had genuine

administrative and persuasive capabilities and an endurance which allowed her sustain an enormous capacity for work. The evidence is that she epitomised the best of the MAI and others relied on her to bring projects to fruition throughout the first half of the Association's history. If others had stronger convictions, she was the one who could translate convictions into actions and oversee them through to completion. For these reasons I have devoted Chapter 5 entirely to her.

A third feature which impaired MAI's ability to achieve, was its inflexible and unwieldy structure which, from the mid 1970s, failed to adapt to suit the challenges of a new era. The governing authority of the MAI was its Council, which at its peak consisted of 18 members and eventually dwindled to 5 Council members. These were drawn from among the leading members of the Association. The executive arm of the Association consisted of a small and varying number of paid administrators and secretaries who were allocated functions depending on the funding available for particular MAI endeavours. Finally, the ordinary members of the Association were music enthusiasts and musicians who paid an annual subscription fee and were entitled to reductions at MAI concerts and lectures. Figure 26 shows the MAI's membership trend from 1948 to 2007, reaching a peak in 1968 and dramatically falling from 1988 onwards.

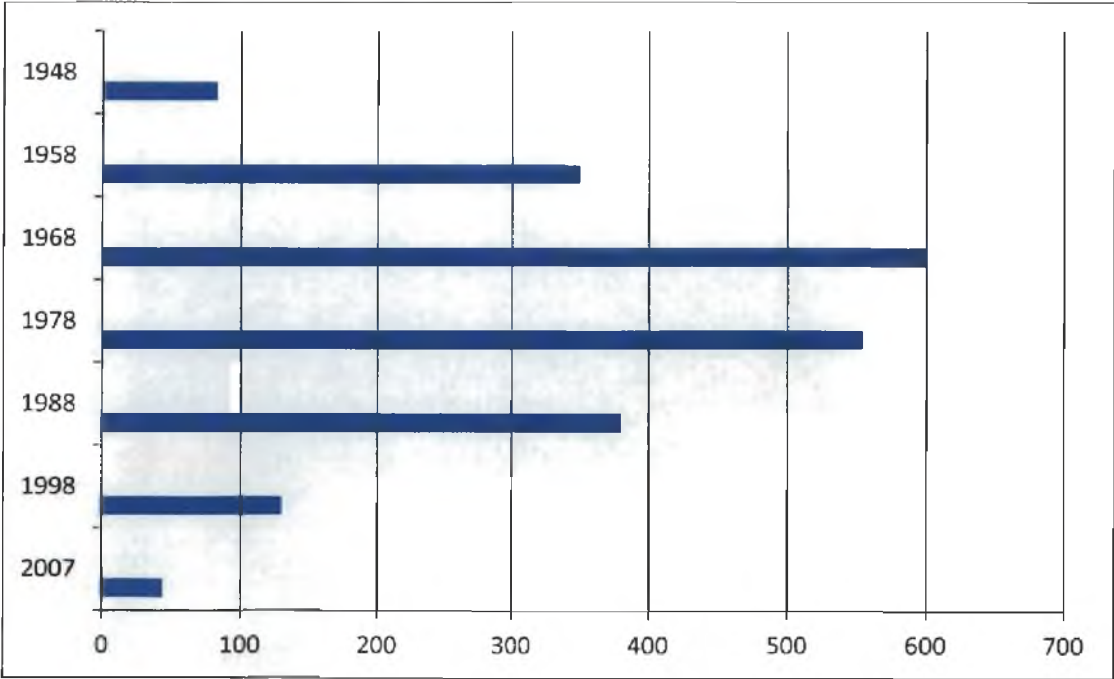


Figure 26. MAI Membership Trend (1948-2006).

I have already discussed in Chapter 6 conflicts that arose from time to time between volunteer members of the Council and paid employees. Chapter 7 describes how particular employees were employed for specific projects and, whereas it was necessary to state this specifically in funding proposals, the MAI did not allow for flexibility in the event of diversification when appointing its paid staff. In that event, additional voluntary work by Council members was required when new projects had to be administered, and this often caused resentment and lack of co-operation. Within such small organisations as the MAI, there needed to be a leadership that could inspire greater co-operative effort by all (both voluntary and paid staff) towards greater achievement in its endeavours. Good management practices, both in the areas of business or services, require leadership to invest time and effort into building up the capacity of all workers (in this case both paid and volunteer), so that each individual can adapt to changes and work effectively as teams as the need arises. Elmore puts it cogently

The job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organisation, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding the various pieces of the organisation together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result.⁷⁹⁴

There is no evidence that MAI, especially in its later years, applied leadership or change theory, even though it espoused both in all its musical endeavours. What is significant is that, in a period of greatest change in arts administration, the MAI remained stagnant in an earlier authoritative mode, and this, in no small way, contributed to its perception as ineffectual and, as its membership declined. Its three policy documents produced between 1989 and 1994 evoke a disconnect between different levels within the Association and give the impression of an organisation claspng at what was available to do rather than convincingly defining a clear meaningful role for itself in what was a new musical order. This, in addition to the blatant inability to show value-for-money in its management of budgets, led to its demise.

It is interesting to contrast my conclusions about the MAI with assessments provided by two of its leading members. Joseph Grocock, in his survey of music in Ireland in 1961 (see Appendix Q) commented that

⁷⁹⁴ Cited in Michael Fullan, *Leading in a Culture of Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 65.

... there has been mention in several sections of this survey of the excellent work that has been done by the MAI ... Within a short time of its existence the MAI has already made steady progress in carrying out all its aims and objects, most of which by their very nature are long-term projects.⁷⁹⁵

Several decades later (1998) Brian Boydell reflected on its pioneering achievements.

There is no doubt that the most significant achievements in the development and organisation of musical endeavour during the second half of this century have been due to the MAI.

When I look back over the fifty years during which it has been so enthusiastically active, there is a great feeling of satisfaction and pride at having been one of the founders and, for many years, an active Council Member of a movement which focused positive endeavour to create so many of those organisations which are responsible today for such a vibrant musical scene in the country.

The country concerts led to Music Network; the Composers' Group led to The Association of Irish Composers and the Contemporary Music Centre; Schools Concerts are still actively organised by the MAI. Many Festivals of Contemporary Music grew out of their biennial Festivals of 20th Century Music; and the existence of the National Concert Hall ... owes much to the hard work and persuasive lobbying which formed the main thrust of our endeavours for many years.⁷⁹⁶

8.2 MAI objectives reviewed

Two ideas arise from considering these personal assessments. Both were written by academics closely connected with the Association, one as a founding and Council member over many years and, because of this, their comments must be judged in that light. Secondly, both commentaries draw attention to the fact that the MAI had already achieved success in meeting its objectives. Boydell's attribution of this fact to the emergence of MAI competitors like Music Network, CMC, the Association of Irish Composers, NCH, etc. is curious, but it is recognition of the fact that these emerged directly as a result of MAI advocacy. Their success ought to reflect well on the Association because they are responsible "for such a vibrant musical scene", something that was not conceivable in the mid-century during the MAI's early years.⁷⁹⁷ Both authors were acknowledging the fact that, by the late twentieth century, MAI (whatever its faults) had already achieved its objectives.

⁷⁹⁵ Grocock, *A General Survey of Music in the Republic of Ireland*, 84.

⁷⁹⁶ Brian Boydell, *MAI 50th Anniversary Celebration Programme*, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 29: 8.

⁷⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Though one must allow for a certain lack of objectivity in these assessments due to the proximity of the commentators to the MAI, nevertheless, they provide an appropriate preamble to this assessment of its six objectives.

1. To further musical education

Apart from the weekly music appreciation lectures at the Peoples' College, Dublin, from September 1948, the MAI undertook other successful educational initiatives e.g. the 'Coming Out' or début recitals (1957), SRS (1967), Ógra Ceoil (1967) and IYO (1972). All of these were successful initiatives and pre-dated current music education activities organised by private and state funded organisations.⁷⁹⁸ The IYO continues to offer high calibre orchestral training to talented young instrumentalists.

2. To improve conditions for composers and musicians generally

The presence of eminent composers such as Boydell, Fleischmann and May on the MAI's first Council, ensured that the standing of composers and the performance and publication of their works would figure prominently on the MAI agenda. The MAI Composers' Group laid the foundations for organisations such as the Association of Irish Composers, the Irish Composers' Collective, Concorde and, more importantly, the CMC, which is solely dedicated to the promotion of Irish contemporary music. These organisations collectively realised the aims of the Composers' Group, and CMC, in particular, achieved what a voluntary MAI espoused but did not have the funds to support. The latter part of this objective was largely pursued by the MAI through its engagement of concert musicians and in providing a platform for young musicians. Musicians were represented by the Federation of Musicians and other unions and, consequently, the MAI objective was essentially one of limited support.⁷⁹⁹

3. To work for the establishment of a national concert hall

The major disappointment for the MAI was its unsuccessful efforts to establish a Concert and Assembly Hall in Dublin. From correspondence in the MAI Archive, it appears that the MAI believed that the public and/or a benefactor would fund a new hall, along the

⁷⁹⁸ Examples of these include, the National Concert Hall's Education and Outreach Programme, Ceol, St. Agnes' Violin Project, Crumlin, The Magic of Music, Galway Music Education Partnership, the Music Generation Project and community projects by various County Councils.

⁷⁹⁹ The current mentoring scheme for advanced musicians, organised by the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, is reminiscent of suggestions made by the MAI to RÉ in 1949 and provides third-level music students (20-23 years) the opportunity to rehearse and perform with the orchestra.

lines of the Carnegie Libraries. However, the MAI's resolute determination to create a new space rather than renovate/adapt a building did not aid its cause. This uncompromising attitude attracted the ire of many would-be supporters and delayed the delivery of the project considerably. Nonetheless, one can appreciate the MAI's desire to create a modern hall for a modern Ireland. The eventual realisation of the National Concert Hall project in 1981, in the shape of a renovated University College, Dublin (UCD) campus at Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin, represented a major part of the MAI's original vision.

4. To submit recommendations on musical policy to the authorities concerned

The MAI's aspiration of becoming a potential music advisory board to Government and R  severely hampered the acceptance of its recommendations on musical policy. Though the membership of the MAI's Council was formidable, with undoubtedly more musical expertise than R  to advise on musical matters, the officials in R  and government departments did not share its views. MAI's recommendations in its Memorandum *Music and the Nation* (1949) were regarded as being utopian, radical and "beyond hope of realisation".⁸⁰⁰ After the publication of the Memorandum and the subsequent debate on the future of music in Ireland in the early 1950s, the MAI was not as vociferous in debating policy issues. From the mid 1980s, it was too preoccupied with its financial difficulties to engage seriously with policy issues; in the 1990s and beyond, it no longer commanded the respect or influence of the leading arts organisations.

5. To encourage the formation of musical groups, societies and choirs throughout the country

The MAI's vision of becoming an umbrella group for amateur and professional music societies, choirs and other music organisations throughout the country was not realised. MAI was mainly Dublin-based and, for the most part, it attracted a 'select' upper/middle class membership. It failed to make an impact on the wider Irish society unlike organisations such as the Gaelic League, the Irish Countrywomen's Association, the Credit Union and the Irish Farmers' Association whose broad appeal attracted members from different social and cultural backgrounds throughout the length and breadth of the country. It should be noted, however, that subsequent efforts to create an umbrella group for music societies in Ireland have been similarly unsuccessful and, for that reason, one might question the viability of the

⁸⁰⁰ MAI, 1948 MAI Honorary Secretary's Report, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 7, 3.

concept. The strength of a local musical society is derived from within the community it serves rather than from outside agencies.

6. To organise popular lectures, concerts and recitals and to awaken a musical consciousness in the nation

The success and funding of MAI's concerts, tours and a limited number of lectures in Dublin and regional venues has been discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Financed mainly by the AC, the MAI continued this promotional role until Music Network, generously funded by the AC, began organising professional concert tours. In its later years, the MAI struggled to host minor concerts in Dublin. The latter part of this objective, "to awaken a musical consciousness in the nation", reveals MAI's narrowly defined view of a musical consciousness and is characteristic of MAI's early portrayal of Ireland and the musical needs of its people as being neglected. It was only in its later years that MAI understood the need to embrace a broader definition of music. By then, it had lost the confidence of its funding agency, the AC.

I would like to make one final comment about the MAI's objectives. When they were first envisioned, they expressed contemporary needs and were appropriate aspirations for improving the musical infrastructure of the country. MAI was part of the post-war movement that viewed culture and the arts as a means of unifying people left divided and devastated after World War Two. With the passage of time and as the State began assuming responsibility for the arts, one would expect a change in emphasis that should be noted in the articulation of objectives. That this never happened over the entire history of the MAI is, in itself, revealing and indicates an intransigent and inflexible mindset. It is this more than any other reason, in spite of its considerable energy and early successes that contributed to its demise. This would not have occurred had the Association been able to adapt its considerable energies to new objectives more appropriate to the needs of a new century.

8.3 Summation

Musical life in Ireland at the time of the foundation of the MAI was very different than today's. The country was then emerging from that period of social and economic difficulty called the Emergency and, apart from amateur involvement in church choirs, local choral/operatic societies, gramophone clubs and very occasional concerts by semi-professional and professional musicians, the classical musical infrastructure in Ireland had

little to offer, although Irish folk music had wider appeal. Patricia Quinn's account of this period is revealing.

To a new generation of music-lovers which takes an Arts Council and its apparatus for granted, it is perhaps difficult to imagine a time when the musical calendar in the capital (there was nothing by way of professional performance outside Dublin) was dominated by the recitals at the Royal Dublin Society, the twice-weekly studio concerts of the radio orchestra (at about half the strength of the present symphony orchestra) and the occasional concerts of the – chiefly amateur – choral, orchestral and operatic societies. Such was the situation here at the end of the Emergency, and while the arrival of Jean Martinon and a succession of European guest conductors offered symphonic concerts, probably more lively than those that are programmed today, there was a serious concern among some musicians at the general paucity of Irish musical life.⁸⁰¹

Against this background, described by Patricia Quinn, the MAI set itself commendable but generally very challenging objectives. The founder members were enthusiastic and idealistic and to realise even one of its objectives was a major task, especially for a voluntary organisation. It would have taken a lengthy time-span to bring to fruition the transformations envisaged by the MAI's founding members and to create a climate receptive to such radical change.

Overall, the MAI's achievement is notable and deserves to be remembered. The long-term nature of a number of its projects dictated that all six objectives could not be achieved by one, voluntary organisation. Some sixty years later, many of these objectives are only being realised through professional, government-funded agencies. The evidence of the Archive shows that the MAI played a valuable role in developing music and music education in Ireland, making it all the more imperative to tell its story.

My initial research questions asked how this once thriving musical association lost its status and, secondly, whether the artistic life of the country was any better or worse because of the MAI. Its weakness lay in the fact that it was unable to keep abreast of national arts policy in the early 1980s. It was unable (or unwilling) to make the transition from voluntary organisation to professional organisation; it did not re-structure its Council or establish independent bodies for certain activities, as advised by the AC and, instead, relied for its favourable reception and funding on its past successes. When the AC reduced its funding from the mid 1980s, the MAI did not source alternative independent funding. Essentially, it

⁸⁰¹ Patricia Quinn, "Olive Smith: Woman of Action," *Soundpost* 15 (August/September 1983): 18.

had run its course and it was time for new organisations to take on Ireland's musical challenges. Interestingly, the MAI went into decline at a time when the arts experienced unprecedented support and growth in Ireland.

The 1980s and 90s were decades of considerable change internationally, as all levels and sectors of society – politicians, civil servants, arts administrators, sociologists, social workers, community groups and the citizens in the streets – moved towards a new understanding of the role and status of culture in their lives. The Victorian paternalism of the concept of 'leisure' had given way, in the wake of the second world war, to a new kind of paternalism, with the state as provider of facilities and opportunities for its citizens.⁸⁰²

For the MAI, the vitality and innovation of the early years of its existence had dissipated by the 1980s, particularly after the departure of figures such as Olive Smith in the mid 1970s. Despite efforts to follow AC recommendations in the early 1980s, the level of debt incurred through various initiatives, such as the SRS, *Soundpost* and the Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival, had grown substantially and, most importantly, its relationship with the AC had weakened considerably on that account. Had this not occurred, its history may have unfolded differently. The SRS and country tours should have followed the path of the IYO in establishing independent structures. However, notwithstanding the manner of its demise, the MAI's contribution to music in Ireland has been significant and manifold and it enjoyed an important role in music advocacy in Ireland. At a time when government funding of the arts was limited, the MAI filled an important niche, provided a valuable musical service and acted as a voice for classical music, particularly in Dublin. Whereas it may not have directly established the National Concert Hall, Music Network or the CMC, it did succeed in creating a climate for the establishment of such organisations and this, more than any other, is MAI's enduring legacy.

⁸⁰² Pine, *Music and Broadcasting*, 525.

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Brio

Counterpoint

Éire-Ireland

Horizon

International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing

Ireland Today

Journal of the Irish Economic and Social History Society of Ireland

Journal of Music in Ireland renamed *Journal of Music* in 2009

Musical Quarterly

Perspectives of New Music

Scientific American

Soundpost

Studies

The Musical Times

The Bell

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The Arts Council	http://arts council.ie
The Arts Council of Great Britain	http://www.arts council.org.uk
<i>The Billboard</i> : The Amusement Industry's Leading Newsweekly	http://www.billboard.com
Contemporary Music Centre	http://www.cmc.ie
Composers	http://www.composers.ie
Central Statistics Office	http://www.cso.ie
Citizens Information Board	http://.citizensinformationboard.ie/publications/voluntary
Culture Ireland	http://www.cultureireland.gov.ie
EU Matters	http://eumatters.ie/
European Cultural Foundation	http://www.eurocult.org
FÁS	http://www.fas.ie
Feis Ceoil	http://.feisceoil.ie
Gulbenkian Organisation	http://www.gulbenkian.org.uk/
International Society for Contemporary Music	http://www.iscm.org
Irish Composers' Collective	http://www.irishcomposerscollective.org
National Lottery	http://lottery.ie
MEND Report	http://www.musicnetwork.ie/content/files/MEND09d.pdf
Music in the Classroom	http://.musicintheclassroom.ie
Music Network	http://www.musicnetwork.ie
National Youth Orchestra of Ireland	http://www.nyoi.ie/about/contact/
SMI Music Theses Register	www.smimusicthesesregister.com
Social Inclusion	http://www.socialinclusion.ie

Society for Musicology in Ireland www.musicologyireland.com

The Ireland Funds <http://theirelandfunds.org>

Volunteering Ireland <http://www.volunteeringireland.ie/page.php?id=7>

Appendix A: Digest of Gillian Smith's Conversation with the Author

(29 March, 2010)

Can you provide me with some biographical details on your mother, for example, date of birth/death, place of birth/death?

Well, my mother was born Mabel Olive Richardson on 19 June, 1906. She was the youngest of three girls and the family lived in Kenilworth Square, Rathgar, Dublin. I believe she lived all her life in Dublin ... well, except for a brief retirement sojourn in Connemara. She had a wonderful garden there and even cut the grass with a hand mower. She was 'wiry' but tough, you know. She had a spectacular view from the house and it was heaven for her. Around 1985, she developed Alzheimer's. You know, it was difficult to see my mother go through this. For a woman with such an active brain ... I suppose any daughter would find this trying, but my mother ... my mother. By the end, it was not safe for her to live on her own. She passed away on 12 September, 1993, in Dublin. I was delighted when you contacted me about this. Her story will finally be told.

What influenced your mother in her voluntary work? What were the driving forces behind her remarkable success?

Let me think. My mother was actively involved in the girl-guide movement from a young age. Their branch was attached to the family's local Presbyterian Church in Rathgar. In fact, I believe my mother lived every inch the brownie's motto, "Lend a Hand" every day of her life. It was during this time that I believe my mother's leadership skills shone through and the girl-guides provided her with her initial outlet to perfect these qualities. She cared a great deal about young people and enjoyed working with them ... a burning desire to bring them on and provide opportunities for them - opportunities to excel. And this is something she never lost. She inherited this sense of concern for young people from her father, who organised concerts for 7-10 year olds, many of whom became well-known musicians, such as David Lillis, Edith Forrest and Peter Kerr. Like my grandfather, my mother would not let anything get in her way. She was highly articulate and well educated.

Your parents married in 1932, did this change your mother's independent spirit?

My mother was a determined woman and my father certainly had no wish, nor indeed would he have ever dreamed of pressing my mother to stay at home. She tried it for a

short time, tending to her garden and taking harmony lessons from William Watson, who, if memory serves me right, was the organist at St. Anne's Church. In fact, those harmony books came in useful for me when I myself studied harmony. I certainly remember referring to Kitson and I'm sure I still have it here, somewhere. Anyway, back to my mother being confined to home life. When I came along in 1943, I guess she had no choice but to stay at home. But this was not the life for her. She was a born leader, a people person, someone who enjoyed a challenge and she needed an outlet to channel her natural skills. She couldn't have sat at home all day so she returned to her job as registrar in TCD. In many ways, the MAI provided the perfect outlet for my mother. She gave it her all and the Association was receptive to her.

I have no doubt the Association was receptive to your mother, she was, after all, one of the driving forces of the MAI. Can you tell me how she got involved in the MAI?

That's quite easy really. My mother was friendly with Edgar Deale, a founder member of the MAI. They were both members of the Culwick Choral Society. My mother was in fact treasurer of the Society for a number of years. Deale introduced my mother to the other members and, well, the rest is history, as they say.

What words would best describe her mother?

Others would inevitably find this a difficult question to answer, but I have no hesitation in my response. There were many aspects to my mother's life. She was a music organiser of extraordinary ability, a campaigner, a visionary, a choral conductor, a supporter of young people, a very musical and cultured woman, highly intelligent and possessing boundless energy. She was a keen gardener and she had a wonderful collection of history books. I remember being surprised at some of her books. The IRA, feminism, the Irish Civil War ... I think my children were particularly shocked, perhaps even horrified might be a more appropriate description, when they discovered that granny might have had republican leanings. But I understood. She lived through that period in Irish history. She enjoyed the literary side of things and acquired some rare books by George Moore. She liked O'Casey, Yeats, Joyce, Synge, Colum. I suppose, you could say she was drawn to Irish nationalism and took a keen interest in what was going on historically, politically, culturally, socially in Ireland.

Appendix B: Recommended Reading List for The People's College⁸⁰³

Popular Introduction:

- Harrison, Sidney. *Music for the Multitude*. London: Joseph, 1939.
Heppner, Samuel. *Background to Music*. London: Milton Head Press, 1948.
Foss, Hubert, ed. *The Heritage of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927.

Instruments of the Orchestra:

- Shaw MacPhail, Ian. *You and the Orchestra*. London: MacDonald and Evans, 1947.
Barne, Kitty. *Listening to the Orchestra*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946.

Historical:

- Gray, Cecil. *The History of Music*. New York: Knopf, 1935.
Mellers, Wilfrid. *Music and Society England and the European Tradition*. London: Dobson, 1946.
Gál, Hans. *The Golden Age of Vienna: World of Music Series*. London and New York: Parrish, 1948.
Dent, Edward J. *Opera*. London: Pelican, 1945.
Lambert, Constant. *Music Ho!*, 2nd edn. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1948.

Biographical:

- Van Loon, Hendrik Willem. *The Life and Times of Johann Sebastian Bach*. London: Harrap, 1942.
Gray, Cecil. *Sibelius*. London: Oxford University Press, 1931
Bacharach, A.L. ed. *Lives of the Great Composers*, vols. 1, 2 and 3. London: Pelican, 1943.

General, rather more advanced:

- Tovey, Donald Francis and Parratt, Geoffrey, eds. *Master Musician Series*. London: Oxford University Press, 1941.

Encyclopaedia:

- Scholes, Percy. *The Oxford Companion to Music*. London: Oxford University Press, 1938.

⁸⁰³ IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 42.

Appendix C: A Catalogue of Contemporary Irish Composers (1973)

SEOIRSE BODLEY

17 Villiers Road, Dublin 8

Born Dublin 1939. Studied at RIAM and UCD. 1956 Arts Council Prize for composition and NUI Travelling Studentship. 1957/9 studied in Germany with Johann H. David (composition), Alfred Kreutz (piano), Hans Mueller-Krey (conducting). Since 1959 on staff of Music Dept. UCD. Doctorate awarded 1960. 1962 Macaulay Fellowship in Musical Composition. Subsequent studies in avant garde music. Active as conductor and adjudicator.

	1	2	3	4	5
Orchestral					
MUSIC FOR STRINGS (1962)	17 mins 4 movts		DOP 1962		MD
MOVEMENT FOR ORCHESTRA (1966/6)	8 mins 1 movt 2222, 4231, perc (3), str		RESO Dublin		MD
SALVE MARIA VIRGO (1967)	8 mins 2 movts 2222, 4231, perc (2), str		RESO 1967		MD
SYMPHONY (1968/9)	20 mins 4 continuous movts 2222, 4231, perc (2), harp, str		RESO 1980	CRC	D
OVERTIMENTO FOR STRING ORCHESTRA (1961)	17 mins 6 movts		RESO 1982		MD
SYMPHONY FOR CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (1984)	28 mins 4 movts 1001, 1000, harp, pf, perc (2), str, qt.		Paris 1984 and RESO Group	CRC	D
CONFIGURATIONS (1967)	18 mins 5 movts 2222, 4331, 2 harps, pf, cel, elec gr, perc (4/5), str.		RTESQ 1967 Paris 1967		D
Orchestra with Voices					
NEVER TO HAVE LIVED IS BEST (1985) W. B. Yeats	13 mins 5 songs 2222, 4331, harp, cel, pf, perc (3), str, Sop solo		RTESQ 1985 Paris 1985		D
MEDITATIONS ON LINES FROM PATRICK KAVANAGH (1971)	25 mins 5 movts 2222, 4231, harp, pf, perc (3), str, Contr solo		OF20CM1972 RTE 1972		D
CEATHRÚINTÍ MHAIRE NÍ ÓGÁIN (1973) Máire Mhac an tSaoi	16 mins 7 songs 2121, 0210, harp, pf, gr, perc (1), str, Sop solo				Sop solo D Orch M
Chamber Music					
SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO (1958)	12 mins 3 movts		RE 1958 and Germany		MD



FRINGE EVENTS

From
SATURDAY 6th
January.
Bank of Ireland

Exhibition of manuscripts and the works of the Italian
Composer LUIGI GALLUPPI
Venue: Bank of Ireland Exhibition Centre, Gough Street, Dublin, 2.
This exhibition is being mounted by the
Italian Institute.

MONDAY 9th
January.
11.30 p.m.
Festival Club

Recital by the CAMERATA SINGERS
Venue: The United Arts Club, 3 Upper Fitzwilliam St., Dublin 2.
Under the direction of David Milne, the Camerata
Singers were founded in 1973 and specialise in
performances of music from 1800 to 1860 and also
music of the 20th century. This concert will
include several works by Benjamin Britten.

WEDNESDAY 11th
January
11.30 p.m.
Project

Folk Concert by MIDNIGHT WELL
Venue: The Project Arts Centre, East Essex Street, Dublin, 2.
Midnight Well is a folk band living and working
in Ireland. The instruments used by them include
a slide guitar and button accordion. Of the
four members who make up Midnight Well, two,
Martin O'Connor and Gerry O'Shea are Irish
and two, Janis Cillibe (Lead vocalist) and Thom
Moore (who writes some of the group's songs)
are American.

THURSDAY 12th
January.
11.30 p.m.
Project

Piano Recital by DECLAN FITZPATRICK
Venue: The Project Arts Centre, East Essex Street, Dublin, 2.
Declan Fitzpatrick was born in Dublin in 1956.
He has been studying at the College of Music since the
age of four with Jane Carty, Ex. J.J. O'Reilly,
John O'Connor and is at present with Norman O'Neill.
He has broadcast on RTE and taken part in previous
Festivals. His concert will include works by
Olivier Messiaen, Eric Sweeney and George Gershwin
(3 preludes and transcriptions for solo piano of
"Rhapsody in Blue").

FRIDAY 13th
January.
11.30 p.m.
Project

Concert by SUPPLY, DEMAND AND CURVE
Venue: The Project Arts Centre, East Essex Street, Dublin, 2.

The Fringe Events co-ordinator is Peter Sweeney.

Appendix E: Programme of Events at the 1972 Dublin Twentieth Century Music Festival

Date	Venue	Artists	Works
4 June 3pm	St. Patrick's Cathedral	RTÉSO, RTÉ Singers and Choral Society Guinness Choir Albert Rosen (conductor) Irene Sanford (soprano) Frank Patterson (tenor) William Young (bass)	<i>Jonathan Swift – A Symphonic Portrait</i> (Gerard Victory) <i>Cantata: Mors et Vita</i> (Brian Boydell) Symphony No. 2 (Raymond Warren)
4 June 1pm	Junior Common Room, TCD	Supply Demand and Curve	Jazz, folk and blues
5 June 3pm	Exam Hall, TCD Concert dedicated to Seán Ó Riada	New Irish Chamber Orchestra André Prieur (conductor) Bernadette Greevy (mezzo) Veronica McSwiney (piano)	<i>Hoelderlin, Hercules dux Ferrariae</i> and various songs (Seán Ó Riada) <i>Antitheses</i> (Patrick Stanford) <i>Four Poems of St. Teresa</i> (Lennox Berkeley) <i>Adagio</i> (Samuel Barber)
6 June 1.05pm	Exam Hall, TCD	Gráinne Yeats (voice, harp/piano)	Songs by Boydell and Fleischmann <i>Four Lyrics of Antonio Machado</i> (Luigi Dallapiccola) <i>Cycle for Declamation</i> (Prialux Rainier)
6 June 3pm	Exam Hall, TCD	Alfons and Aloys Kantarsky (pianos)	<i>Mikrokosmos</i> duets (Béla Bartók) <i>Structures</i> (Pierre Boulez) <i>Corroboree</i> (Earle Brown) Concerto for Two Pianos (Igor Stravinsky) <i>En Blanc et Noir</i> (Claude Debussy)
7 June 1.05pm	Exam Hall, TCD	Gilbert Berg (bassoon) Veronica McSwiney (piano)	<i>Récit Sicilienne et Rondo</i> (Eugène Bozza) <i>Sarabande et Cortège</i> (Henri Dutilleux) Piano Sonata (Hindemith) <i>Dialogue for Bassoon and Piano</i> (John Kinsella) Piano Sonata No.3 (Sergei Prokofiev)
7 June 3pm	St. Patrick's Cathedral	RTÉ Singers Hans Waldermar Rosen (conductor) Robert Munns (organ)	<i>Civitas Nova</i> (Gerard Victory) <i>Suite for Organ</i> (Adrian Cruft) <i>Omega</i> (Nicola Le Fanu) <i>Nysedt, de Profundis</i> (Eric Sweeney) <i>Solus et Victimam</i> (John Joubert) <i>Et Resurrexit</i> (Kenneth Leighton) <i>Motet</i> (Max Reger)

27 June 1pm	Junior Common Room, TCD	Supply Demand and Curve	Jazz, folk and blues
28 June 1.05pm	Exam Hall, TCD	Allegri Quartet – workshop	4 th and 6 th Quartets (Béla Bartók)
28 June 2pm	Exam Hall, TCD	Gabriel Masson Brass Ensemble	<i>Céad Mile Bienvenues</i> (A.J. Potter) <i>Prelude, Choral and Fugue</i> (Roger Boutry) <i>Three Preludes in Fanfare</i> (Pierre Max Dubois) <i>Tre Momenti</i> (Andre Casanova) <i>Epilogues</i> (Janos Komivés) <i>Golden Suite</i> (Henri-Pierre Sauguet) <i>Stances Minoennes</i> (Antoine Tisné)
29 June 1.05pm	Exam Hall, TCD	Veronica Dunne (soprano) Courtney Kenny (piano) Jeffrey Cosser (percussion)	<i>The Táin</i> (James Wilson)
29 June 2pm	Exam Hall, TCD	Allegri Quartet	Quartet nos. 4 and 6 (Béla Bartók) <i>Three Pieces</i> (Igor Stravinsky) Quartet Op. 10 (Prionnsías Ó Duinn)
30 June 1.05pm	Exam Hall, TCD	Therese Timoney (violin) John O’Conor (piano)	<i>Prelude, Toccata and Epilogue</i> (Seóirse Bodley) <i>Songs of Grief</i> (Bruce Graham-Hersey) Violin Sonata No. 2 in D, Op. 94 (Sergei Prokofiev) <i>Piano Variations</i> Op. 27 (Anton Webern)
30 June 2pm	St. Francis Xavier Hall	RTÉSO, Colman Pearce (conductor) Bernadette Greevy (mezzo) Charles Lynch (piano)	<i>Meditations on lines from Patrick Kavanagh</i> (Seóirse Bodley) Symphony No. 1 (Dmitri Shostakovich) Piano Concerto No. 2 (Béla Bartók)

Appendix F: Winners of the Varming Prize (1973-1986)

Year	Recipient	Work
1973	Francis Corcoran ⁸⁰⁴	<i>Chamber Sonata</i>
1974	Philip Edmondson	<i>Merciless</i>
1976	John Buckley	<i>Wind Quintet</i>
1978 ⁸⁰⁵	Raymond Deane	<i>Amalgam</i>
1980	Paul Hayes	<i>To the Snake</i>
1982	No award	
1984	No award	
1986	Rhona Clarke	<i>Sisyphus</i>

Sources: IRL-Dn Acc 6000, various boxes.

⁸⁰⁴ The first winner of the Varming Prize, Francis Corcoran received £75 for his composition, *Chamber Sonata*, which was performed by the Pulcinella Ensemble at the 1974 Twentieth Century Music Festival. Pat O'Kelly, "The Varming Prize," in *Counterpoint* (November 1973), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40, 20. The MAI was not alone in promoting competitions for the composition of new works. The Dublin Symphony Orchestra, the Feis Ceoil, the Cultural panel of Dublin Corporation and the AC's Elizabeth Maconchy composition foundation were also involved in similar competitions.

⁸⁰⁵ In 1977, as the entries were not of an appropriate standard, the committee decided to reorganise the competition as a biannual event with an increased award of £225 for the winning competition. Eoin Garrett, "Varming Prize," in *Counterpoint* (March 1978), IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 40: 3.

Appendix G: Venues Investigated by Concert and Assembly Hall Ltd. (1952-1961)

Year	Venue	Outcome of Investigations
1952	Blessington Basin, Dublin	Site deemed unsuitable by Dublin Corporation as it was too expensive to drain and was required by them as an open space. ⁸⁰⁶
1952	Merchants' Quay	Purchase of leasehold deemed too costly by CAH – this was a complicated acquisition as a number of premises needed to be required; one owner valued his property at £30-50,000 and another £100,000. Compulsory acquisition of the site by the Corporation was investigated but it was discovered that this lay outside their remit and necessitated the introduction of a Bill which could take up to three years to pass in the Dáil. Alderman J. McCann TD felt members of the Corporation would oppose the building of a concert hall over social housing. ⁸⁰⁷
1952	High Street/Nicholas Street	Site was regarded as very suitable but earmarked by Dublin Corporation for municipal offices.
1952	Mendicity Institute, Usher's Island	Site deemed unsuitable by CAH as it was in very poor condition.
1952	Greenmount Oil Works, Harold's Cross Road	Site deemed unsuitable by CAH.
1952	High School, Harcourt Street	£60,000 capital required was regarded as too costly.
1953	Montrose House, Stillorgan	Site acquired for Radio Éireann and CAH hoped to lease 3 acres. Minister for Posts and Telegraphs promised to make the site available but delays in completing the lease between government and the Pembroke Estate on the Montrose site further delayed the national concert hall project.

⁸⁰⁶ Report of a meeting held on 29 May, 1952 at City Hall, Dublin between Dublin Corporation Town Planning Committee and the Concert and Assembly Hall Committee, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

1954	St. Mathias Church, Hatch Street	Only one record of correspondence in relation to this site which stated that after initial enquiries it was discovered the premises was leased to Irish Church Representative Body at a nominal rent and owned by Hely-Hutchinson. ⁸⁰⁸ As there was no further mention of the site in the Archives one must assume the site was unsuitable, possibly because of its size.
1955	Capitol Theatre	Estimated cost of refurbishment prohibitive.
1956	Woodbrook Hall, Bray, Co. Wicklow	Location not suitable as it was too far from Dublin.
1959	Theatre Royal, Dublin	Estimated cost of refurbishment prohibitive.
1961	Royal Dublin Society	RDS proposed to extend their existing concert hall but MAI preferred to build a purpose-built hall.

⁸⁰⁸ Letter from Arthur Cox Solicitors, St Stephen's Green, Dublin to Olive Smith on 27 August, 1954, IRL-Dn Acc 6000, Box 11.

Appendix H: List of Concert Hall Fund-raising Concerts and Initiatives (1960-1965)

Date	Venue	Artists
15 January, 1960	Theatre Royal, Dublin	Concert: RÉSO, Tibor Paul (conductor) and Gioconda de Vito (violin)
3 March 1960	Private house	Gramophone recital organised by Mrs Seton Pringie
April, 1960	Private house - Cylene, Glenageary Hill, Dublin	Alice Barklie (piano) organised by Mrs Betty L'Estrange
9 April, 1960	Private house	Chamber Music Group
28 April, 1960	SFX Hall, Sherrard Street, Dublin	Concert: Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten
2 May, 1960	Private house - Ravensdale, Baily, Dublin	Coffee morning arranged by Joseph Darby
22 May, 1960	Malahide Castle, Dublin	Dowland Consort, Brian Boydell (director)
22 June, 1960	Various venues	Culwick Choral Society
20 September, 1960	Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin	Fashion Show
2 October, 1960	Olympia Theatre, Dublin	RÉSO, Tibor Paul (conductor) and Heather Harper (soprano)
19 October, 1960	Goethe Institute, Dublin	Irish German Society
23 October, 1960	Mansion House, Dublin	Autumn Fair – various volunteers
13-25 March, 1961	Olympia Theatre, Dublin	Beethoven Festival: RÉSO, Tibor Paul (conductor), Fou Ts'ong (piano) and Shura Cherkassky
8 April, 1961	Russborough House, Wicklow	Prieur Ensemble
2 June, 1961	Private house - Castleknock Lodge	College Singers
21 June, 1961	Hazel Hatch Lock, Kildare	Dowland Consort and Gráinne Ní hEigeartaigh (harp/voice)
9 March, 1963	Olympia Theatre	Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano)
4 May, 1964	Gaiety Theatre	Vitoria de Los Angeles (soprano) and Gerald Moore (piano)

26 September, 1965	Connolly Auditorium, Liberty Hall, Dublin	Irish Chamber Orchestra, Janos Furst (conductor) and Hugh Maguire (violin)
28 October, 1965	Connolly Auditorium, Liberty Hall, Dublin	Martha Argerich (piano)
5 December, 1965	Exam Hall, TCD	College Singers and orchestra with Julian Dawson (conductor)
20 December, 1965	SFX Hall, Sherrard Street, Dublin	St. James Gate Musical Society and Victor Leeson Wind Quartet

Appendix I: MAI Handel Festival (1959)

Date	Venue	Artists	Work
28 September	Ballroom, Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin In association with the Irish-German Society	Dublin Chamber Orchestra Herbert Poeche (conductor) Dublin Chamber Choir Hans Waldemar Rosen (conductor) Iovan Iovanovitch (leader) Patricia O' Keefe (soprano)	Concerto Grosso in A Op. 6/11 Psalm 112 <i>Laudate Pueri Dominum</i>
30 September	Presbyterian Hall, 16 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin	Brian Boydell (lecturer)	Lecture: 'Handel in Dublin'
3 October	City Hall, Cork (presented in association with the Cork Orchestral Society)	Cork City Choral Society Staf Gebruers (chorus master) Douglas Cameron Orchestra Sylvia Cleaver (leader) Frederic Jackson (conductor) Veronica Dunne (soprano) Helen Watts (contralto) William Young (bass) Flora Vickers (soprano) David Galliver (tenor) Roger Stalman (bass baritone)	<i>Samson</i>
5-17 October	Civic Museum, South William Street		Exhibition of Handel manuscripts and relics
5 October	St. Francis Xavier Hall, Dublin	Culwick Choral Society Olive Smith (conductor) Douglas Cameron Orchestra Frederic Jackson (conductor) Soloists as above	<i>Samson</i>
8 October	Town Hall, Galway	Franciscan Choral Society Fr. Cassian Byrne (choral conductor) Douglas Cameron Orchestra Frederic Jackson (conductor) Soloists as above	<i>Messiah</i>
9 October	St John's Hall, Tralee	St. John's Musical Society Douglas Cameron Orchestra Frederic Jackson (conductor) Soloists as above	<i>Messiah</i>

10 and 12 October	Children's concerts, Dublin and Waterford	Douglas Cameron (conductor)	
12 October	St. Francis Xavier Hall, Dublin	St. James' Gate Musical Society Douglas Cameron Orchestra Frederic Jackson (conductor) Soloists as above	<i>Solomon</i>
13 October	Centenary Church, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin	Methodist Centenary Church Choir Sylvia Fannin (conductor) William Watson (organ) Soloists as above	<i>Jephthah</i>

Appendix J: List of Sponsors, Guarantors and Subscribers of the Handel Festival (1959)

The Council of the Music Association of Ireland thanks the following individuals and organisations who by their co-operation and generosity have made this Commemoration possible:

The Arts Council

The Shaw Trust

MUSIC SOCIETIES PARTICIPATING

Barr Gramophone & Musical Society	Irish-German Society
St. Joseph's Choral Society, Boyle	Kilkeny Arts Council
Cork City Choral Society	Limerick Oratorio Society
Cork Orchestral Society	St. James's Gate Choral Society
Culwick Choral Society	The Century Church Choir, Dublin
Focas Ceoil Cheathadacha	Tralee Gramophone Society
Franciscan Choral Society, Galway	Waterford Music Club

GUARANTORS AND SUBSCRIBERS

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Mrs. R. Hamilton	Rev. Fr. Peter Tradden, S.J.
Mrs. E. Hoppen	Dr. J. Wallace
Mrs. H. Hudson	J. Wilson

and all those throughout the country who have so kindly given hospitality to our visiting musicians.

Appendix K: List of ‘Coming Out’ Recitals (1957-1983)

Date	Venue	Soloist
15 January, 1957	Royal Hibernian Hotel, Dublin	Mary O’Brien (violin) Kitty O’Callaghan (accompanist)
30 April, 1957	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Florence Ryan (piano)
14 October, 1957	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Margaret Hayes (violin) Kitty O’Callaghan (accompanist)
29 January, 1958	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Julian Dawson (piano) Hazel Morris (contralto) Dorothy Stokes (accompanist)
28 April, 1958	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Brendan O’Reilly (violin) Kitty O’Callaghan (accompanist)
29 September, 1958	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Valerie Walker (piano)
17 February, 1960	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Mary Gallagher (violin) Rhona Marshall (accompanist)
6 June, 1960	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Bernadette Greevy (contralto) Jeannie Reddin (accompanist)
28 February, 1962	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Brigid Mooney (cello) Gerard Shanahan (accompanist)
10 October, 1962	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Carmel O’Byrne (operatic soprano) Jeannie Reddin (accompanist) Patricia Dunkerley (flute) Jeannie Reddin (accompanist)
25 October, 1962	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Deirdre McNulty (piano)
20 February, 1963	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Eily Markey (soprano) Gerard Shanahan (accompanist)
23 April, 1964	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Emily Wilson (piano)
8 October, 1964	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Máire Ní Chuilleanáin (violin) Veronica McSwiney (accompanist)
November, 1964	Christ Church, Leeson Park	Gerard Gillen (organ)

4 February, 1965	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Anne Cant (soprano) Dorothy Stokes (accompanist)
3 November, 1965	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Brian McNamara (violin) Veronica McSwiney (accompanist)
9 March, 1966	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Gillian Smith (piano)
17 November, 1966	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Eileen Donlon (soprano) Havelock Nelson (accompanist)
12 November, 1967	Royal Hibernian Hotel	John O'Connor (piano)
24 January, 1968	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Anne Woodworth (mezzo-soprano) Dorothy Stokes (accompanist)
4 March, 1970	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Darina Gibson (piano)
19 November, 1970	Royal Hibernian Hotel	Lynda Byrne (piano)
12 March, 1971	Exam Hall, TCD	Therese Timoney (violin) John O'Connor (accompanist)
23 November, 1971	Exam Hall, TCD	Moninne Vanecek (violin) Veronica McSwiney (accompanist)
8 November, 1973	St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough Street	Peter Sweeney (organ)
28 February, 1974	St Ann's Church, Dawson Street	Emer Buckley (harpsichord)
17 October, 1974	St Catherine's, Thomas Street	Áine Nic Gabhann (contralto) Darina Gibson-Veale (accompanist)
30 September, 1976	Exam Hall, TCD	Maureen Elliman (piano)
28 June, 1979	Exam Hall, TCD	Malcolm Proud (organ)
10 April, 1980	Blackhall Place, Dublin	Úna Hunt (piano)
9 October, 1980	St. Ann's Church, Dawson Street	Denise Kelly (harp)
2 June, 1981	National Gallery of Ireland	Leonora Carney (piano)

20 October, 1981	National Gallery of Ireland	Geraldine Malone (oboe) Mary O'Sullivan (accompanist)
24 April, 1982	National Gallery of Ireland	Ann Caleb (mezzo soprano) (accompanist)
17 May, 1982	National Gallery of Ireland	Brenda Hurley (piano)
15 May, 1984	John Field Room, NCH	Aisling Heneghan (piano and harpsichord)

Appendix L: Department of Education Funding of SRS (1971-1990)

Year	SRS	IYO
1971-72	2,000	
1972-73	2,000	500
1973-74	2,000	700
1974 (9 months)	1,800	1,000
1975	2,400	1,400
1976	2,750	1,750
1977	2,500	1,500
1978	2,500	1,500
1979	3,000	1,500
1980	3,500	1,500
1981	3,800	1,500
1982	4,300	1,700
1983	5,500	2,500
1984	8,000	7,000
1985	13,000	17,000
1986	13,000	22,000
1987	7,000	4,500
1988	7,000	5,500
1989	7,000	5,500
1990	7,000	6,000

Appendix M: Number of SRS Recitals/Workshops (1968–1984)

Year	No. of recitals/workshops given per year
1968	122
1969	76
1970	119
1971	130
1972	134
1973	140
1974	153
1975	139
1976	146
1977	114
1978	128
1979	105
1980	186
1981	246
1982	313
1983	315
1984	334

Appendix N: Number of SRS Recitals and Workshops (1985-2003)

Year	Recitals	Workshops
1985	348	
1986	172	5
1987	188	6
1988	193	7
1989	170	10
1990	151	12
1991	155	10
1992	164	9
1993	156	9
1994	167	9
1995	180	12
1996	192	12
1997	176 ⁸⁰⁹	
1998	180	
1999	184	
2000	198	
2001	206	
2002	200	
2003	225	

⁸⁰⁹ From 1997 onwards, the figures for recitals and workshops were combined in Annual Reports.

**Appendix O: Arts Council and Department of Education funding of SRS
(1985-2003) and AC funding of Music Network (1986-2003)**

Year	Total Arts Council Grants to MAI £	Department of Education Grant to SRS £	Arts Council grant to Music Network £
1985	35,500	13,000	-
1986	21,800 ⁸¹⁰	13,000	31,300
1987	10,700 ⁸¹¹	7,000	55,810
1988	13,950 ⁸¹²	7,000	66,000
1989	14,000 ⁸¹³	7,000	71,500
1990	18,000 ⁸¹⁴	7,000	72,200
1991	18,500	7,000	78,750
1992	18,400	7,000	88,000
1993	19,500	7,000	93,500
1994	19,600	7,000	129,900
1995	20,250	8,000	154,000
1996	21,000	8,000	200,000 ⁸¹⁵
1997	21,500	8,000	200,000 ⁸¹⁶
1998	5,000	8,500	269,152

⁸¹⁰ Of which £10,500 was granted by the AC to the SRS.

⁸¹¹ Of which £9,500 was granted by the AC to the SRS.

⁸¹² Of which £10,150 was granted by the AC to the SRS.

⁸¹³ In 1989: SRS £10,000 and £4,000 for SRS workshops.

⁸¹⁴ In 1990: SRS £11,000 and £5,000 from a private sponsor.

⁸¹⁵ In addition to a grant of £21,000 sterling from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

⁸¹⁶ In addition to a grant of £21,000 sterling from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

1999	5,000	8,500	285,652
2000	6,500	10,000	479,970
2001	7,500	12,000	337,200
2002	6,000	12,000	400,600
2003	9,000	12,000	401,700

Appendix P: Friends of Classical of Music



Friends of Classical Music
(formerly Music Association of Ireland)

Newsletter for October- November 2008

Chairman : Rodney Senior Tel : 4925495 (H) 087 – 7572130

Treasurer : Madeleine Cooke Tel : 2980530

Secretary : Aidan Meagher Tel : 8342070

Editorial : The Future of Feis Ceoil Safe

Classical music fans were relieved and delighted when it was revealed back in June that the **ESB** was to be the new sponsor of the Feis Ceoil for the next three years, at least. Following the withdrawal by Siemens of their 22-year sponsorship there was some doubt that the Feis might not be able to go ahead in 2009. But the members of the Feis Ceoil Board believed the Feis was too important to be allowed to die and set to work to find a new sponsor. They are to be congratulated for their strenuous and successful efforts to attract the sponsorship of such a prestigious company as the ESB. The fact that a number of other high-profile companies were interested in sponsoring the Feis is indicative of the respect and esteem it has built up over its long 112-year history.

The name of the new sponsor, which was kept a closely guarded secret, was officially announced by Maurice Flynn, this year's President of the Feis Ceoil at a reception in No. 10, Lower Ormond Quay, a truly beautiful Georgian house. Mr. Flynn, on behalf of the Board, expressed their pleasure and satisfaction at having as their chief sponsor the ESB and hoped their relationship would be a long and fruitful one. Mr. Páraig McManus, on behalf of the ESB, thanked Mr. Flynn and said it was a great honour for his company to be associated with the Feis Ceoil. He congratulated Mr. Flynn and the Feis Board for a very convincing

Appendix Q: MAI Objectives and Groocock's Assessment of its Objectives (1961)⁸¹⁷

MAI Objectives	Groocock's Assessment (1961)
1. To further musical education	This is being pursued mainly along with 6
2. To improve conditions for composers and musicians generally	The MAI has formed a Composers' Group. It has initiated the formation of the Music Teachers' Association of Ireland. It has also helped to safeguard individual professional musicians, in conjunction with 4. It has sponsored the formation of the Chamber-Music Group
3. To work for the establishment of a National Concert Hall	In 1957, after many years of preliminary work and planning, the MAI was responsible for the formation of a Company, known as Concert and Assembly Hall Ltd. This company now attends to the specific details of 3, and is already far advanced with the scheme. By its organisation of special concerts other functions, the MAI has already established the nucleus of the large fund necessary for this important project
4. To submit recommendations on musical policy to the authorities concerned	The MAI has produced memoranda for submission to the Department of Education, Radio Éireann, and other authorities
5. To encourage the formation of musical groups, societies and choirs throughout the country	This is far harder to achieve, through a central council sitting in Dublin. What has been achieved however is the encouragement of many of the existing musical societies, through the organisation of tours by vocal and instrumental artists; the provision of the Douglas Cameron Orchestra (augmented) for the accompaniment of several choral societies in oratorios, as part of the recent Handel Fest; and the enrolment of almost 40 corporate members in the MAI Federation of Music Societies
6. To organise popular lectures, concerts and recitals and to awaken a musical consciousness in the nation	Lectures are arranged from time to time in Dublin Quarterly recitals are held for MAI members (and others) to towns all over the nation, this is being achieved gradually through all the activities of the MAI

⁸¹⁷ Groocock, *A General Survey of Music in the Republic of Ireland*, 68.